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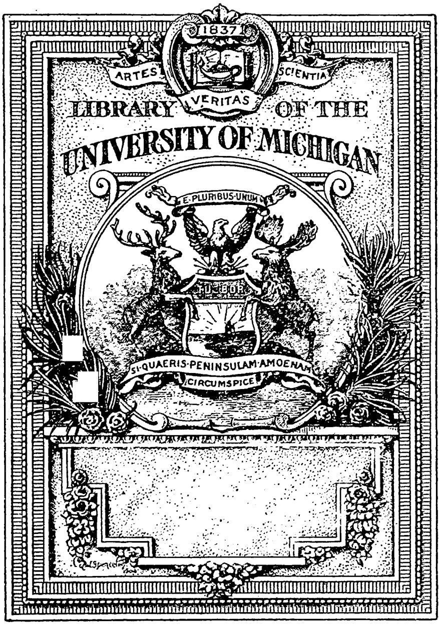
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FIVE YEARS OF IT.

BY

ALFRED AUSTIN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

"Genius," 'tis said, "is Patience." An altogether opposite idea has got abroad this rapid age; and yet Buffon's definition, I warrant, is not far from truth.

No Preface ought to contain more than two short paragraphs. Was it worth while penning thus much in order to say (with all humility) that this book has been twice re-written? And will the result only be, that severe critics—would there were more of them!—will exclaim, "Pity 'twas not written a fourth time"? Any way, I submit. The majority are never wrong.

FIVE YEARS OF IT.

CHAPTER I.

"O blest retirement!"—GOLDSMITH.

THEY who are acquainted with the chivalric pages of Froissart and of Joinville will surely remember that those worthy chroniclers narrate, with an especial satisfaction, how their pet knights were accustomed, before spurring to the field of battle, to engage awhile within their oratories in devout exercises and sacred meditation. Holy men, and even worldly sophists, assure us that life is one long, arduous combat, from beginning to end. Would it not therefore seem that none of us would do amiss, were we to prepare for our struggle by those solemn thoughts which are to be cultivated only in seclusion.

Of this mind at least seemed to be my hero, Edgar Huntingdon, whose struggles will be narrated in the ensuing pages. His oratory he found in a spot about sixteen miles from the home of his childhood, the village of Afrel, on the banks of the river Scarf. As if to counteract the too effeminate fertility of the valley in which it lies cradled, hills on either side, rugged, wild, and stretching far away, encompass it in their stern and sterile girdle. Here, whilst yet a child, Edgar had spent some of his happiest days. His former home was tenanted by strangers: the great London was to be henceforth his only hearth;—beyond its shelter was he a stranger and a wanderer.

Afrel is no watering-place, even in the most liberal sense of the word. But its romantic beauty, and its water, which however boasts no property beyond extreme purity, make it a resort for perhaps a hundred visitors, and these principally children, during the summer months. Here, then, had Edgar Huntingdon sat down, a temporary recluse. Yet he knew every denizen of the place; he had known them from his infancy: so that, despite his retirement, there were homely faces round him still. Afrel has but two streets. Through one, the beck, swollen by the tribute of streams that rise far away among the hills, makes pleasant music the long year round. In the other stands the old church, the same in feature, though changed in ritual, as it was hundreds of years ago. No one dares to say when it was built; but it must have been in rude times, for the architecture can claim no affinity with any acknowledged style or period. A hand, unskilled but reverent (perhaps it moulders in the graveyard below), has carved a rough cross over the uneven porch.

Memory invested with a feeling of fond interest for my hero everybody and everything belonging to Afrel; but there was one old dame who had always been his especial favourite. Betty Nestfield had kept donkeys, time immemorial, on the green mound just below the church, and taken charge of the cold-spring baths, within that tottering whitewashed cottage, halfway up the brow of the southern hill. Like all her sex, I care not whether they be in years eighteen or eighty, or any age between these extreme periods—whether they be dressed in purple and fine linen, or wear the coarsest serge, Betty had an idol—one person whom she placed on a pedestal and worshipped, who could neither think, nor do, nor look wrong. That person was Edgar Huntingdon. She loved to tell how Edgar, when a child, "t' nicest lad that iver came to Afrel," captivated by the scarlet jackets of her donkey-drivers, had begged to remain and be a driver too.

Poor old lady! some years back she had lost her helpmate, her companion, her "good man," as she delighted to call him. She had talked of him ever since, and it was not the mere selfish regret and babble of loss. "We niver had a differ," she would say, "for five-and-forty year, all t' time we were togither." One donkey, called Jessie, being the last "my Nestfield iver bought," was the particular object of Betty's affection. She never let it go "wintering" on the moors, but stabled it and tended it with the most untiring tenderness, reserving its services for the sex which is more gentle to animals, and for Edgar Huntingdon. No other of the less considerate division of the human race had ever mounted, or ever will mount Jessie, I can assure you.

Edgar was standing with the old dame, on the green mound in front of her cottage door, this fine October morning on which this tale naturally commences.

"I was going to Glendover," he was saying, "but thought I would look in and see how you and Jessie and the rest of the family were."

"Ay, ay, bairn! ye may well say Jessie's part o' t' family. It's coming twelve year sin' my good man bought Jessie. She'll be eighteen year old come 'fore end o' Christmas. Ay, and Nestfield would ha' been eighty, had he been spared me—he would." And she lifted her blue apron to her moist and now failing eyes.

"And how old are you, Betty?" Edgar knew her age as well as his own; but he wished to lead her away from her grief.

"Seventy-eight, honey! seventy-eight—going seventy-nine. Ay, it's a great age. Did I iver tell you how many grand-childre I have? Why, I've twenty-seven, and that's t' youngest on 'em. He's a wild un, too—he is; he goes at such a rate wi' t' donkeys. But I niver let him drive Jessie. No, my good man bought Jessie."

"Well, I must leave you now. I am

only going to Glendover for the day—good-bye;" and he left her looking after him affectionately, with her usual—"He's t' nicest lad that iver came to Afrel."

Six miles farther west, embosomed in a neighbouring valley, lies Glendover, with its dismantled abbey, its glorious woods and glades, through which, narrower but still more picturesque than at Afrel, the silver Scarf winds its fantastic way. Every break in the ruin, every stile, every turn of the river,—Edgar knew them all by heart, and loved them as only poets love the sweet sympathizing face of Nature.

Before him was the wonder of his childhood—the waterfall; somehow, it did not seem so high as in younger days departed. He could not but think that the shattered oriel, shaken arch, and weed-grown aisles, resembled the many anticipations of life destroyed, and the good intentions forfeited; that, like the cascade, hope appeared not so lofty as in earlier days; and that the river, like the stream of sorrow, was the only thing unchanged and unbroken. How long this meditation would have lasted, or into what refinements of contrast proceeded, perhaps they can tell who are in the habit of indulging in similar moods. My hero's moralizing was suddenly interrupted by the discovery that he had nearly walked over somebody, a moment ago unperceived. On his entirely returning to a lucid state, he found to his horror that he had summarily knocked a sketch from the hand of an utter stranger to the ground. He was somewhat reassured by seeing that the face of his new acquaintance wore a smile of simple amusement.

"Pray, pardon my stupid fit of absence," Edgar exclaimed, stooping hastily to pick up the sketch; "but I was thinking—" Here he paused, as though it struck him that it was quite unnecessary, and moreover would be extremely ridiculous, to say what he had been thinking about. "However, will you show me your sketch, as a full assurance that you forgive my clumsiness?"

"With pleasure. You interrupted a worthless occupation; but I fear I have broken the ladder of a vision that was both holy and instructive." The words were said very quietly, but they assumed a sort of sneer when the speaker referred to his own sketch.

"You are very complimentary, considering that we are in the woods; but if you are pleased to value as highly my opinion of drawing as you are my unfortunate musings, you will consider your success in your occupation at least equal to your indifference."

"I suppose," was the stranger's response, "I must not retort your remark about compliments and the woods. However, I have finished this sketch, and will give it you, if you will be pleased to accept of it. I am going on to Deepwell, and should be glad of your company, unless your habit of solitary thinking has made you, as the ancients said, either a god or a beast."

"I hope I am neither. *I* am going as far as the Leap, for the sake of old memories, and will travel with you that part of your journey. You will find I am much of a mortal—plenty of clay." Edgar felt that as he spoke his companion was examining him minutely. It was not long before he heard the result of the scrutiny.

"You are an embryo poet, or ought to

be, by your—well, not to be too particular—by your appearance. Will you acknowledge as much?"

"I can compliment your intuition to this extent, that poetry is my hobby; and that I write it, or what I intend for it, sometimes. Are you satisfied?"

"Perfectly; I was so before I asked you the question. If you had said 'no,' I should only have concluded that you were not yet intimate with yourself, or not frank with me. It *is* there, as plainly as the river through these woods." He spoke with an unassumed confidence, that had in it nothing of boasting, but merely of knowledge. There was a pause. Edgar took a rapid survey of his companion.

There was little about his appearance to claim a lingering attention. Of middle stature, slim, and apparently active, he seemed quite dead to his own exterior. His hair was black; his complexion, sallow; he wore a discontented, but withal kindly look. His eyes, which must have once been restless, appeared subdued, and brought into an unwilling subjection.

"I suppose you are an artist," said Edgar; "but I have not your accurate judgment of feature to guide me—only your pencil, and the talent of your sketch."

"You are not right; yet scarcely wrong. I am sorry to say I am nothing, as the phrase is. Unfortunately, I have enough to satisfy my moderate cravings and ambition." Edgar thought he pronounced that last word uneasily. "Drawing and painting are my toys, my kind playmates. You are more in earnest; you would never be satisfied with playthings. Don't walk so fast; it betrays you. Are you going to publish?

Pardon me, perhaps you have done so already?"

Edgar felt entertained. An utter stranger was turning him inside out, and reading him a page from his own heart. He was inclined to be frank with this man. Besides, it made no matter; frank or not, he would be understood.

"I confess I am ambitious. I believe with Disraeli, that the time has come when to be young and to be indifferent can no longer be synonymous. But as yet I have written nothing that even *I* think worthy of publication. I have only just left college, and am but twenty-two. The world has not taught me what it wants; and a song is thrown away that is not in the same key as the listener."

"True Your age, I confess, rather puzzled me. I thought you older. You see *I* am not young" (he looked forty); "so indifference is not incompatible with my position, even according to Mr. Disraeli."

"Perhaps you *were* ambitious?" suggested Edgar with a smile.

"Perhaps I was," replied the stranger kindly, but with evident reserve. "If I was, you see I am cured." Edgar glanced at him; there was disappointment in his tone—none was visible in his face.

"Yet you see," he continued, "I am interested in others who are ambitious. You confess to being at least an amateur votary of the muses; do you not find that this working, week-day world is rather fond of interfering with your worship? Is not the lamp of your sanctuary often extinguished?"

"I cannot accuse the world as yet. But it seems to me that this romance-worship is little subject to the attacks of intrusion. Who can get at your sanctuary? Who can extinguish your lamp? It is in the society of stupid, commonplace people that I am struck with my favourite fancies. Did we often meet persons capable of imparting interest to their conversations, we should not be driven to so much self-communing. Were there no bores, I imagine there would be no poets. Wearied with the eternal treadmill of stereotyped remarks, the constant repetition of established truisms, one contracts a habit of conversing on one subject, and reflecting upon another."

"Doubtless. We are obliged to live two lives, and those simultaneously. So far I can understand that the world exerts a salutary influence upon reflecting dispositions; and thus Nature, which is said never to be idle, makes use of its lower, to foster the advancement of its higher, order of intellects. But I would speak of the constant contact with those whom we do not, and should not usually regard as bores—whom we must meet hourly—to whom we are bound both by duty and instinct—I mean, one's own family. Do you not find that you are forced to make constant sacrifices of your moods to their exigencies and demands?"

"I understand you now. But, unfortunately, in applying to me for information, you ask one who is peculiarly unfitted to give you any. My father I never knew; my mother died ten years ago. My nearest connection is a gentleman who is supposed to act as my guardian, and, at any rate, acts as my banker."

"Um! Sad for the boy!—good for the poet! I beg your pardon—I was thinking aloud. You—you—I suppose, then, like me, have sufficient, should you wish it, to support an idler—which the world thinks a poet is. Do you think me impertinently inquisitive?"

"Not at all. They say that young men are conceited; so I conclude they ought not to be very much hurt when they are regarded as of sufficient importance to be asked such questions as yours. Plainly, I have £300—in four years I shall have £1,800 a year. But I trust I shall not be an idler, even if, which I must not expect, a poet."

"Then you will labour—at what?"

"I am going to the bar. I go up to London to-morrow to enter at the Temple."

"I think you are wise. It takes a long time for a man to learn to do nothing, and with comfort. If you have the taste only, without the 'faculty divine,' for poesy, legal studies will discover to you the truth. If God means you for a poet, sing you will;

all the professions in the world will not stifle the necessity at your heart. See, there is the Leap—I suppose we part. But mind, youth is strong and reckless. If you can, and perhaps you can, bear up manfully against low abuse and scoundrel calumny" (the speaker's face wore a look of intense anger for the moment), " go on, and prosper. If you cannot, take my advice, and be a private citizen. We may meet again. I shall be glad to hear of your success. Good-bye."

The stranger went his way. And thus the two, ignorant even of each other's names, parted by the Leap.

The October day is done. Somewhere behind the hills the regal sun went down in all the pomp of victory; bent upon conquering other lands, and leaving his pale but queenly deputy enthroned in heaven. Edgar is leaning over Afrel bridge, which spans the Scarf just below the village. He gazes at the purple hills, at the ever-flowing, ever-talking river, at the dark church-tower. Do you not, dear reader, who have ventured thus far with me, desire to know something of my hero's exterior? He is quite in repose now; let me describe him.

Is he handsome? Heroes should be; and it is a bold thing (they say) to spurn a beaten track. But truth is truth; and I, who am critical in these matters, am compelled to deny him an attribute whose value is, I think, as often underrated by those who do not possess it, as it is overrated by those who do. I would rather be good-looking than not, just as I would rather have a new coat than one out at elbow. Who would not? And so I have a certain amount of regret that Edgar Huntingdon is not so imposing as he might be. It may be said that those somewhat broad shoulders suggest great power of enduring fatigue; but it may also be remarked that an evidently acquired stoop manifests the absence of any desire to unnecessarily undergo it. His forehead, not remarkably large, is finely chiselled; the brow not fully developed; but pregnant with promised intellect. The temples are delicate—a censor might suggest, to a fault; but they soften the rather hard expression of the lower portion of the face; and perhaps there is a slight self-complacency in their superiority traceable in the brushing back of the hair, lest it should hide or mar the more perfect, and seemingly more cherished, gift. The expression of the deeply-set brown eye is somewhat puzzling. One moment, you would say it bespoke a melancholy—the next, only a thoughtful temperament. Though his face is pale—and, should he wax earnest, will be paler—he is not delicate.

It is well the sketch is more or less complete, for he moves away, and mutters—

"Well—well—to-morrow!"

To-morrow! How many brave young hearts have sallied forth into the world with "to-morrow" on their proud, flaunting pennons, and have lost their pennons, and their hope, and their all, and got nothing, even for a bargain! Well, who dares prophesy? The young have failed so often and so utterly, that men (ay, and even women—fond, faithful, encouraging women—whose distrust is much worse to bear) begin to disbelieve in them. Mind not, brave boy! To-morrow! Go on! We follow.

CHAPTER II.

"Aut viam inveniam, aut faciam."

It has pleased the despotic world—against whose opinions, however ill-founded, there is, as everybody knows, no hope of appeal—to give the Inns of Court, in their physical capacity, the very worst of reputations. The popular idea of the Temple conjures up dark, dismal, damp, tumble down tenements, partaking of the baneful characteristics of the class who inhabit them; and whom the aforesaid world has also chosen, in its supreme will, to paint as black as it alone knows how.

Yet, most discriminate reader, the idea is purely fanciful. I, who write this contradiction to it, know the Temple as well as you know the hearth before which, every eventide, you sit; and, moreover, I am not unacquainted with other places on this multifarious earth; and certainly I can recall no spot where "merchants congregate," no quarter where are assembled the world's workers, that can vie in beauty, in cleanliness, in cheerfulness, with thee, O time-honoured Temple!

Nowhere, within the precincts of this overgrown London, flourishes there greener grass; and here, in the rich autumn months, have I seen two or three score of carriages, in the day, with no mean coronets, and with even strawberry-leaves on the panels (and the world, not I, makes much of these things), put down noble ladies, who have come from the far and holy West, to see the Temple chrysanthemums. And you, fair reader! who have, I doubt not, bachelor friends *usque ad nauseam*, even to being bored, ask some of them if they know aught about chambers in this locality of which I write; and if they be frank with you (as why should they not?), I doubt not you will turn from the popular opinion, and be of mine. Ask the nursemaids and the rosy-cheeked children who come, of summer afternoons, to disport themselves in front of our windows, what they think about the matter. I agree for them to be umpires.

Edgar Huntingdon, at least, was well satisfied with his unpretending chambers in Garden Court. The principal hours of the day, however, he spent in King's Bench Walk, in the chambers of a Mr. Trantham, a well-known special-pleader, by whom he was initiated into the sacred mysteries of the law. Mr. Trantham had three other pupils —Horace Cooper, Charles Etheridge, and George Hamilton. These young men were pretty fair specimens of the race who read in barristers' chambers. They were perhaps more devoted to balls than briefs, and yet not absolutely idlers, with, maybe, the exception of Horace Cooper. When they were all in the pupil-room together, any continuous application was out of the question; and it was fortunate for Edgar, who was by nature energetic, and by intention earnest, that they seldom made their appearance before one o'clock; so that by being at chambers at ten, and joining Trantham in his own room, when so inclined, he had, after all, but little difficulty in pursuing his bent. And, to give an opinion, I do not think that my hero was much injured by being occasionally forced to desist from labour, and join in the vivacious and somewhat noisy amusements of his companions. At first, I fear, they thought him rather proud, unsociable, and young; and he them, flippant and purposeless. They had already since discovered that he was signally amiable; as free from a reserved hauteur as is consistent with self-respect, and at least as experienced as themselves. Nor had he failed to find that, though they were not the most industrious fellows in the world, they contrived to pick up legal knowledge, and had a sincere intention of getting on in life, somehow. With Cooper, he was rapidly contracting an intimacy that might, without much desecration, be already termed friendship; with the other two all distance, at least, had departed.

Seven months had Edgar now pursued his legal studies. It was a hot May morning; he had got through more than his usual amount of work; the rest had arrived—Cooper, as usual, making his appearance last.

"Well, Huntingdon, who was the belle last night at Sir Winter's? Eh, old fellow? Was it Miss Fairfort? Come now, be honest." He turned to the others. "I assure you, Huntingdon danced with her the whole night. She certainly comes up to old Terence's description—

> "Voltu, Sosia!
> Adeo modesto, adeo venusto, ut nihil supra."

I did not expect to find you here this morning, amorous Master Edgar! Strong-minded of you."

"So strong-minded," said Edgar, laughing, "that I have been working here since half-past nine of the clock. Look here!" And he held up some thirty sheets of well-covered draft-paper.

"But how the deuce do you know her? She isn't a nobody, I can tell you."

"To solve the awful mystery—I was at college with her brother; we were, and are, considerable friends. Behold the solution! *Apropos* of this subject, I must tell you what I heard of Cooper, the other day. You know old Liddell, don't you, Etheridge?—of course you do. Well, he asked Cooper, how ever he managed to keep himself out of scrapes and matrimony, for he was always making furious love to girls, and yet never married any of them. 'Oh,' said Cooper, 'when parents ask me my intentions, I propose; and then it comes out I have £200 a year, and the thing is smashed.'"

"Shame! shame!" was the chorus of voices, in which Cooper joined.

"Villain!" shouted Etheridge theatrically, "dost thou trifle with the sacred affections of my beloved daughter? Come, Eliza, to my heart!" seizing hold of Hamilton. Huntingdon interposes, as the *Deus ex machinâ*, or clearer-up. Etheridge makes another mock speech, unites and blesses the happy pair, and the curtain falls; and poor old Gower, Q.C., in his chambers immediately below them, and busy with a very heavy case, sends up to Trantham, who is similarly occupied, imploring that he will not give his pupils such boisterous work; which Trantham afterwards relates to his pupils as a most excellent joke—in which light it is considered by everybody.

During a slight truce of silence, the

Times is perused all round; but it was a very short truce indeed. This was not a working day, evidently.

"Do you know young Brydges, Huntingdon?" asked Hamilton. "A very clever fellow—wrote the last extravaganza for the St. James's. He was telling me that he has become a convert to the doctrine of metempsychosis."

"Hallo!" shouted Cooper, "I know him; he surely hasn't been turned into a zebra, has he?"

"Not quite. But the first day he dined in hall he felt convinced that the poor paniers were formerly wicked benchers, who have now been transmogrified and condemned for their sins to wait on law-students."

"I think it's a plausible idea," said

Cooper; "and, moreover, it reminds me that I heard of Etheridge being at the Debating Club in Fleet Street, the other night—beer and shag, is it not? No! Well, then, lavender-coloured gloves, patent leather, and perfumed speeches; and he rose to get rid of his emotion—strong emotion, sir! upon this momentous question" (cheers); "and when he sat down, an honourable member rose to reply, and lo! it was one of Brydges's metamorphosed benchers—a Lincoln's Inn panier."

A loud jeering laugh followed, and an "Eh! you did not tell us this; why so close?"

"Why, you see, as I had lost my tail."

"We've found the tale," broke in Hamilton, who had been a medical student, and never lost the opportunity of making a bad pun.

"Bah! out on your puns; I thought some one, whilst mooning about for occupation, might fall into the trap, and lose his tail, too. When the panier rose, with all the dignity of an offended senator, I thought it time to slope."

"Right, my boy! But, gentlemen—gentlemen!" said Cooper, jumping up frantically, "last day of Epsom—no handicap! Oh, fallen from its high estate! Time was—but no matter." Cooper had been with Trantham two years, and was thus the patriarch of the pupil-room. "Let us not disgrace the days of old. Let me see. Twenty horses — four fellows — five shillings each—eh? Agreed. I'll write the names, and lend my hat patriotically for the occasion. Asdrubal's the favourite. Who draws first?—you, Huntingdon—go ahead!"

"I've Asdrubal!" exclaimed Edgar.

"By Jove! and so have I. You've put in two Asdrubals, and omitted an outsider."

"Genius! genius!" said Etheridge, mournfully. "Can't help it, poor boy."

"Very sorry, gentlemen; will redress the wrong, and be more careful. Wasn't that a knock? Come in."

It was amusing to see the easy rapidity with which these noisy young men assumed a quiet and calm self-possession, as a stranger entered, whom Edgar introduced as Mr. Frank Fairfort.

But the new comer was not one to keep his company at a distance very long. On learning the nature of the occupation which he had interrupted, he expressed a wish to join in it.

"Four horses each, now. Draw, Mr.

Fairfort. Safe as the mail, this time," said Cooper, resuming his freedom. Again he had the favourite; but alone, this time.

"Pa-par!" said the newsboy, introducing his rubicund face, and asking if the *Times* was done with.

"There's the *Times*, my boy! Got the evening pa-par? Let me look. Phyllis first, by Jove!"

"An outsider! Who has her? Mr. Fairfort, wish you joy! Done, by the Lord Harry!"

"Oh, Frank, you interloper! A pretty introduction to my friends. Larceny, at least."

"Betty Larceny—fill his—" and the would-be punster was, as usual, shouted down.

This is not an unfair sample of the afternoons spent in Mr. Trantham's pupil-room, in King's Bench Walk. Edgar was far more benefited by this style of pastime than he dreamed of, or than perhaps you, dear reader, can yet imagine. It rubbed off the rust of melancholy that constantly gathered about him. For success such as he desired, nothing is so necessary as a knowledge of the human machine; and this is gained only by a constant familiarity with it. The great poet—at least, the successful poet—must be a man of the world, as Shakspeare, Pope, and Byron were. He must be a mover in its circle of fashion and change; he must breathe the same atmosphere, throb with the same pulse, and think with the same mind. London, not the Tyrol, is the foster-nurse of poets!

It was five o'clock; the hour at which our inmates of King's Bench Walk generally —to use Etheridge's word—sloped. Edgar left with Fairfort. Between these two young men, a friendship too sincere and perfect not to be rare, had sprung up during their college career. No two people could possess more contrasted characters. Fairfort wished to sail through life undisturbed—happily, because lazily. Possessed of a warm heart, he sought in friendship all that was necessary to sweeten existence; and, with a cheerful spirit, he lay in the boat of life, plying no oar, trimming no sail, but dreaming on in, to him, delicious listlessness. Nature had denied him nothing but application. His abilities in reality very great, seemed still greater, as apparently he never studied. A retentive memory did more for him than all the other faculties combined do for most people; he seldom read, but he never forgot. Fortunately, he was born to a station in which, perhaps, energy is not so useful as a facile brilliancy. His father was a baron—comparatively poor, it is true; but his position of only son secured to him the choice of being idle. Even this very indolence, so contrary to Edgar's disposition, assisted the formation of the friendship existing between these young people. For there can be no doubt that, to an arrant idler, a certain kind of poetry is a great assistance. And many an hour, together, during their college life, did they spend in the perusal of page after page of the older poets: one seeking from them a help—a *dulce lenimen*—to his indolence; the other, a spur to his ambition. They had not seen each other for eight months, until the dance of the preceding evening, alluded to by Cooper. A dinner at Verrey's was agreed to.

"I was very much pleased," said Edgar,

"with your sister. Apart from her being the beauty last night, she is so talented and ready. She has not adopted your *dolce far niente* doctrines; she is tolerably enthusiastic and ambitious."

"Yes, indeed; I am not astonished at your agreeing so well. She often expresses her disgust at what she calls my indifference, and wishes she could give me the distaff, and she assume the sword or the pen. You'll call on her and the governor to-morrow. What time will suit you? I will call on you first."

Edgar was silent for a few seconds, though he was not, as Fairfort thought, considering what time would suit him best. At last he said—

"Our friendship has nothing to do with your family; we can surely be friends, as at college."

"What on earth do you mean? If you wont call, you wont; and there's an end. But it is by special desire, as the playbills say, that I ask you."

"Very well," replied Edgar, with misgivings, but unwilling to display them. "Say one o'clock."

"One be it. By the way, is the old passion as strong as ever? Are you not going to publish soon?"

"No, indeed; at least, not yet. I have written some things latterly; but most were composed in the streets, as is my habit; so I fear they have little connection, as I always gave way to the feeling uppermost. I have not *worked*, so I cannot have produced anything valuable. I have not been long enough in the world to be its oracle."

"You are the same fellow as ever—the

same who wrote over his mantelpiece at college—

> ‘Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
> Is our destined end or way;
> But to act that each to-morrow
> Find us farther than to-day.’

By-the-by, have you heard anything of Pampesterra, and his daughter, with whom we were both so desperately smitten?”

“Only one of us, master Frank, if you please. I had a letter from him the day before yesterday, in which he says that, now my influence is removed, his fortunes have changed. So I have told him to come up to London with his daughter, and I will see what can be done. Can you help me?”

“*I!* You are facetious. And as for you, Don Quixote was a practical man in comparison. Pray, what are you meditating?

Dividing your fortune with these sufferers? Or giving it all to them, perhaps? How many pensioners have you? Half of London?"

"Nay, nay; I shall find Pampesterra something to do. He is not too proud to work though he is a Castilian. O Frank, if you were exiled and penniless!"

About eighteen months previously, while Edgar and his friend were still at the University, a Spanish officer, accompanied by his daughter, his only near relation, had sought the great abode of learning, in the vain hope of there obtaining the means of making a small competence, in lieu of the comfort and the home of which fate and fidelity to his party and to his military oath had deprived him. He soon discovered his mistake. He somehow had the good fortune to come across my hero, who set himself to work to accomplish for the stranger some practical and beneficial result. His energy succeeded; and, within a week, Pampesterra was supposed to be Professor of Spanish to about a dozen of Edgar's more intimate acquaintances, who met, during the hours of freedom, at the exile's lodgings. So long as Edgar's influence was present, so long did the amateur pupils keep together; but with Edgar's departure waned the Spaniard's prosperity and pupils. The letter which Edgar mentioned explains the rest.

"I fear," said Frank, continuing the conversation, "that I can do little by personal exertion. But I suppose money will be wanted, and I can spare £10."

"I certainly accept it, then. They may requite us both, some day."

Prophetic words! though uttered unwittingly. Even if unseen, yet surely, no single benefit, even this side the clouds, but brings forth many thousand-fold, and strangely too.

Edgar was at King's Bench Walk rather earlier than usual on the following morning; but, somehow, he did not work as attentively as was his wont. He kept putting down the pen to think. He did not like the idea of the intended visit; he had a presentiment that misfortune would arise out of it, though of what kind, or how, he was at a loss to conjecture. He was not too proud to see—perhaps his very pride helped his insight in this particular—that such things as degrees in social rank exist, and ought to exist. And he was willing to confess that Lord Fairford's social position was higher than his own: the peer was surely above the small country squire's son. His forebodings were still uppermost when his friend arrived.

"Quick, Edgar, or I shall be disgraced—I am after my time!"

"I am ready. Let us go."

There was as marked a contrast in the appearance as in the dispositions of these young men. Fairfort was tall, and had a half-lounge in his walk. Perhaps he looked more pronouncedly the aristocrat, and was undoubtedly the handsomer. The first look would have been fixed on him; the second on Edgar. But it would have remained there. His step, firm, decisive, and regular, bespoke energy and resolve; and his pale, chiselled countenance would attract by its meaning, and sustain interest by its plenitude of character.

They entered a house in Piccadilly, that street of palaces. Edgar perceived, at once, that he was under the roof of a nobleman of taste, if of moderate means of satisfying it. The room opened on to a conservatory of slight dimensions; beyond was a garden of proportionate extent, but scrupulously cared for, and secluded from the Argus-gaze of the capital. Edgar had walked towards the conservatory, when the door opened, and Miss Fairfort entered. His eyes, as he turned, fell with all an artist's frankness, yet all an artist's delicacy, upon a figure of moderate height, but so elegant and so finely proportioned that nothing could have enhanced, and very little would have marred it. She had her brother's blue eyes; but hers were more pensive and more expressive. Her hair was that indescribable brown that has no name, since there is nothing to which it can be likened.

Her mouth seemed formed for love and poetry—the mouth of the Venus of Canova. Her complexion wore that rose-tint—so rare, though so often talked of—which blooms only on the cheeks of those who unite peace of mind to purity of soul. Such, to my hero's eyes, seemed Annette Fairfort.

"If I am to judge by appearances, Miss Fairfort, last night's exertions have not much trespassed upon the comfort of to-day."

"Appearances are right, for once, though it was my first dance this season," she replied, in a tone that recalled to Edgar Shakspeare's idea of "an excellent thing in woman." "I might give back the compliment, though I suppose it would be none — would it, Frank? — to" — she was going to say something arch; but she paused, then added—"to gentlemen. A little more practice, and I shall be equal to the most unsusceptible."

"For my part," said Frank, "I think the best part is the fatigue. I never should dance at all if I were not certain of being tired the next day; it makes one so deliciously lazy." And as he spoke he practically illustrated the idea by throwing himself on the sofa, and knocking a handsome volume upon the floor. Edgar took it up.

"For shame, Frank! I am sorry, Mr. Huntingdon, you so trouble yourself for such a time-waster."

"Oh! I would not have him disturbed for the world," said Edgar laughingly. "It is quite a pleasure to wait on some people, they are so nobly, regally, majestically idle. But am I to judge of your love for the interior by the exterior of this book? It is beautifully bound."

"I certainly have no show-books, and it is one of mine. I am romantic enough to think that a binding of gold is not equal to one line of genuine poetry."

"A rare sentiment, and one I should scarcely quarrel with; yet better, perhaps, not to be expressed before a miscellaneous audience. They would only smile; and nothing is so offensive as the stupid but patronizing sneer of want of sympathy."

"Oh, but I do not hide my opinions; and at least *you* must not blame me, for Frank has often spoken to me of your taste, and I believe I may say talent, for poetry."

"Frank does his best to get me a reputation: it is the only field in which he exerts himself. But do you really admire Tennyson so immensely?"

"Immensely is scarcely the word. Tennyson is far from being my idol, though my admiration for him is at least equal to, I should think, that of most people."

"I feared we should not agree when I saw the sanctuary in which you had enthroned this poet-priest, but I see we are much of the same opinion. I wish he had more judgment. When he published this 'Princess' he showed that he could write a great many pages of nonsense without knowing it; and I have always fancied that judgment is requisite for all great success."

"Probably: and it always appeared to me that, despite Tennyson's evident care and labour, he says beautiful things too much by accident, and stupid things on much the same principle. He wants self-criticism. It is seen, too, I think, in 'In Memoriam,' —but I hope you admire that?"

"The author of 'In Memoriam' ought to be pumped on," put in Frank.

"That shows that you have never—I was going to say felt, but at least suffered," said his sister rebukingly.

"I am glad it does. For my part, I think poetry is an unhealthy sign. If people would only be happy there would be no verses. They are the result of exertion and bile. *I* never made any."

"O Frank!" exclaimed Edgar, "your memory fails you. I have seen—"

"Do not notice him, Mr. Huntingdon: he is in a self-contented contradictory mood to-day. He is as poetical, in reality, as the silliest of us."

"Of that I am fully aware; and I know, too, that he appreciates this very 'In Memoriam;' and in this he is with a very small minority, among whom I am glad to see you, too, are one. And yet, if Tennyson by 'In Memoriam' proved himself one of the beautiful thinkers of the world, he also showed his inability or his indifference to create a sympathizing audience. It is want of sympathy with one's age to publish now a poem of such a length without action. He who writes it may be a poet: he who publishes it is not a sensible man."

"And yet," objected Miss Fairfort, "the world likes egotism in poets?"

"No doubt it does. It is pleased when a great man dissects his heart for its amusement; but then he must do it in a manner appreciable by them. Byron's name might appropriately be the heading of every one of his own pages; but every page with him is as fresh as if none other had been written, and the writer is acting—he is *doing* something. Byron, with whom judgment was, perhaps, the most remarkable characteristic, never dares to moralize abstractedly for any length. Even in 'Childe Harold' we move constantly, and, though there is no real, there is often an apparent oblivion of himself. He mixes up his own sorrow so intimately with all that is beautiful in art and great in history, that you seem to be listening to something infinitely more solemn and more vast than the melancholy musings of a single man."

"I quite comprehend the distinction between the egotism that seeks sympathy from the universe for its own small self, and that which identifies itself, and almost loses itself, in the troubles and complaints of thousands. And I have often thought that Tennyson wants art—the perfect art—if I do not seem absurd in the expression,"—she said this so diffidently,—"the perfect art of Nature."

"The expression is a happy one, and needs no apology," said Edgar; "for in the deepest solitude Nature works what we call artistically. We have no right to the two words; they are in reality synonyms. And Nature works what we call artistically, because she works without a thought as to the effect she produces."

"There, I think, lies the secret. If men, blest with genius, would but follow their own good instincts, they would never go wrong. It is the desire for effect which has spoiled many writers. It is a want of honest simplicity; and it has, I fancy, injured Tennyson. People fancy, when they are trying to create impressions, they are working with an artist's will; and, as you say, they are doing exactly the reverse of what Nature does, and therefore err. You are rather a severe critic, Mr. Huntingdon, and this will naturally make us more anxious to see your first attempt in a line which always meets with severe criticism."

How long this conversation would have lasted, had it not been interrupted, it is difficult, even from analogy, to say; but we all know to what lengths clever young people of different sexes will go when they once are fairly embarked in a conversation of which poetry is the beginning and end. I suppose that an opportunity is thus afforded them of expressing sentiments which they cannot, or dare not, convey in any other more direct guise. It is astonishing how many pretty and very significant things are said through the medium of discussions on novels and poems. Diffident young men (among whom I do not mean to insinuate my hero ought to be classed), by this useful and easy means, constantly open to tender, blushing maidens the most hidden secrets of their heart. As a rule, the elders think it not worth their while to listen to such rubbish; and so under their very eyes love is made, and creates no suspicion. I must own that these last remarks have but little to do with Edgar and Miss Fairfort; but they are strikingly true, and will do as well noted down here as elsewhere. And again I say, that it is impossible to form any conjecture as to how long the above conversation would have lasted, had not Lord Fairfort's entrance interrupted it.

His Lordship was a tall man, though somewhat bent. His unimpeachable courtesy half betrayed his natural coldness; yet his address was pleasing. He was yet handsome, and had the *tout ensemble* of one well-born and well-bred. He entered with an outstretched hand and an apology.

"I have been trespassing largely on your forbearance, Mr. Huntingdon! Will you pardon me? These people from my estates, with their demands on my good-nature and supposed influence, have nearly driven me to quote Mr. Pope's words—

> 'Shut—shut the door, good John!—fatigued, I said;
> Tie up the knocker—say I'm sick—I'm dead.'

Am I correct?—*you* will know."

"Perfectly, my Lord."

"And very *àpropos*," put in Frank, "if you give the two following lines:—

> 'The dog-star rages—nay, 'tis past a doubt,
> All Bedlam or Parnassus is let out.'

Poetry has been the order of the day—and I am quite out of the field: Huntingdon glowing with eloquence, and Annette just catching fire as you entered."

"Miss Fairfort," remarked Edgar, "certainly meets the eloquence (if such it be) with the warmest yet most discriminate taste."

"You ought to know, Mr. Huntingdon," said his Lordship—"you ought to know. You have chosen an eminently literary profession—such, sir, as I should have chosen," he added courteously, "if circumstances had not made me a slave without a choice. My son prefers obscurity to distinction."

"And a headache."

Edgar laughed, and shortly after rose to depart. As he walked to the door, Lord Fairfort said—

"I am aware of the friendship existing between you and my son. I trust that nothing will ever interfere with it, and I shall be happy to afford the means of its being cultivated. You will, without ceremony, be always welcome here."

As Edgar walked back alone to the

Temple, he began to think that his misgivings had been unfounded, or founded only on his stupid pride. Could anything be more assuring than Lord Fairfort's frank cordiality? And Miss Fairfort—what a charming girl! And so, time went pretty happily with our hero, who was studying for the bar, and thinking of being—a poet.

CHAPTER III.

"Nec dulces amores
Sperne, puer! neque tu choreas."
HORACE.

"Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer."
BYRON.

ANNETTE FAIRFORT was the younger of two daughters. Her sister, Lady Allanroy, had been married five years. Even in her earliest infancy she had lost that guide for whom no other preceptor can be substituted—whose tender care and gentle hand can never be replaced—her mother. She was too young to comprehend at the time her loss; nor in riper years did she fully appreciate its extent. Lord Fairfort, though proud of and sincerely attached to his children, was a man to whose naturally cold disposition the loss of his wife and the experience of the world had superadded an additional hardness and deficiency of sympathy. He had received his estates impoverished and encumbered; and he expended all his energies, and nearly all his time, in retrieving the mischief entailed by the folly, and perhaps the wickedness, of his ancestors. In public life he was known only by his noble name and high social position. Left thus to judge for herself at an age when most girls have opinions ready-made for them, Annette Fairfort had arrived at many conclusions, differing considerably from those upon which society has affixed its permit. Hence, at least, she gained whatever benefits (and some are inclined to doubt their existence), originality confers. Her heart had not been "preached down with a little hoard of maxims;" and, though she might be too romantic for her particular century, she wore an earnest and simple sincerity of enthusiasm that must have pleased in any.

A morning or two after his call in Piccadilly, Edgar saw among his letters an envelope that unmistakeably augured an invitation. He gave it precedence. It was, as he had anticipated, an invitation to a dance at Lord Fairfort's, on the 14th of June. He placed it on his side of a portrait of the Duke of Wellington, which was dedicated to such purposes, and which was already very nearly full; for my hero, though, as already stated, having no near relatives, had pretty fair introductions into London society. On the parallel side of the picture, Cooper's cards lagged not far behind. The latter made his appearance earlier than usual, and at once noticed the accession to his adversary's ranks.

"Upon my word, Huntingdon! you are distancing me; you are the first fellow in these chambers who has done it, I can tell you. But I have not Miss Fairfort to plead for me."

"I think you have not much reason to complain. You must remember you are an old stager, whilst this is my first year in town; and people want new faces, as they want new fashions, even though they be ugly ones."

"Thanks for your consolation! It's as you say. Handsome men" (with a mock air) "are at a discount."

Edgar thought that, withal, Cooper was

mortified. He was to be seen at almost every dance. When his father died he left him a competence, a handsome appearance, winning manners, idleness, and the entrance into the best *salons*. And no one danced oftener, had the reputation of flirting more, or was a greater favourite than Horace Cooper.

"Ah, well! I oughtn't to care; and indeed I don't. The fact is, Huntingdon, I'm engaged, and am going to be Philip sober. It is to no one you've seen. I will introduce you to my bonnibel—there is Mary Linwood's portrait."

"I should very much like to meet the girl up to *your* ideas. But I hope you are not going to do anything stupid. I thought you were too poor to marry—you've always said so."

"Oh, my dear fellow! I can manage. I

have three, and she has about two hundred a year. But no extravagance, now." And he said it so merrily, that Edgar was rejoiced, and even envied him.

Carriages were driving up to Lord Fairfort's door, and Edgar was seeking his noble host's daughter among the throng of dancers. As he approached her, a gentleman walked hastily across the room and claimed her for the next dance. Edgar offered his arm.

"Stay, sir; Miss Fairfort is engaged to dance this waltz with me."

"I think not, Mr. Bingham!" said Edgar, quietly, but it must be confessed, with some hauteur. And as once before that evening he had waived his claim, in order to extricate Miss Fairfort from a dilemma which she had unconsciously created, and as she had at the time voluntarily named this dance as a substitute, he was not inclined to bend to this demand, especially when advanced with so little courtesy. So he said—

"Will you decide, Miss Fairfort?"

"You have at least the prior, if not the only claim," she replied with dignity, as she accepted his arm, and joined the crowd of dancers.

"How strangely discourteous Mr. Bingham was to you! You seem to know him?"

"Oh, yes; we were at school together, where he always persisted in hating me. I remember, the last evening there, actually imploring him to be friendly, and he refused, saying some stupid boyish thing about revenge. Usually the sources of hatred, like those of the Nile, are lost in obscurity—if you will pardon the simile."

"And not unoften fertilize like the Nile, by their overflow, what they threaten to destroy, if you will pardon my continuing it."

"You have at least improved it. I dare-say his dislike will not be attended by any very disastrous consequences. I know his family well, and I often meet him; but this is the first time, since we parted at school, that he has shown more than coldness. It is a pity—I cannot feel angry."

"I am sure, Mr. Huntingdon, you could give him no real animosity."

"I hope not;" and he laughed. "So you must not believe him if he tries to make me out a monster."

"I prefer my own opinion of people," she said archly; "and in this case I shall not go to Mr. Bingham for information."

Two years hence, and did Annette Fairfort remember this conversation? Perhaps. She seemed to forget it at present, as, still on Edgar's arm at the conclusion of the waltz, she entered the conservatory. The beauty of the night and the full moon tempted them into the garden beyond.

"Stay," said Edgar, "I had better save you from a possible cold, and mitigate some of your charms" (he said it in a frank manly way that could not offend) "with the help of this cloak; for you know Diana is a female divinity, and therefore given to jealousy, and might visit you with a more terrible chastisement than even poor Actæon. She will not be very jealous of this sober covering."

"No, but if you are not careful she may become jealous of your compliments to me, and wreak signal vengeance on both. She is so beautiful we can surely talk of her. Besides she has been time out of mind the poet's goddess, and, therefore, yours."

"She has too many and too immortal adorers to care much for my poor worship. Somehow I always feel, from such a night as this, a strong rising-up within me against what we call civilization. Nature has fewer devotees than of old—civilization only worships itself."

"And yet the regret is useless. We have built a Tower of Babel: we must endure the consequences—the discord of thought, of feeling, and of interest; the rivalry, the contentions, the misery" (she raised her beautiful hand mournfully, and again it fell slowly to her side) "the misery, and the despair."

"Nay, you are too desponding. Much is yet left us, I am convinced. Anxious solicitude and tenderness of heart are more awakened, and find a more extensive and fitting sphere for their purifying influence in the depths of a great city than in a more primitive and perhaps more holy state. For if there is more misery, there is more benevolence; if more poverty, a more extended and softening generosity: we learn to lean more on each other's shoulder, and give a helping hand to those who are not quite so strong. If men suffer, women soothe; if we sin, surely you, good and persevering angels, weep, pray, and bring us back. Dearly do I love the face of sweet Mother Nature; but I find in the development of the world, and the strange material civilization which is fostered by the concourse of thousands upon thousands to one spot, the great poem, the living drama, instinct, if with intenser evil, breathing more earnest good, wherein, not as in the Greek tragedies of old, there is a supreme Fate, unavoidable by gods and men, but wherein is the great Motor, the divinity of civilization—Charity.

Herein lies our sphere, Miss Fairfort—herein the circle of our duties. If the glorious woods and hills lend us rapture and yet repose, let us imitate their example by soothing those whom civilization has engulphed, whom no woods, no hills, have power to rejoice."

"There is more poetry in London than I have thought," she said simply. "I think we had better return. I fear we have been absent too long."

Did her arm cling more confidingly to his as she spoke? Or, did he press it closer to his side? If so, it was the half unconscious magnetism of the moment: they were soon far apart in the crowd of dancers.

The morning twilight was creeping up from the German Ocean, and breaking against the silent city, as Edgar walked homewards down the now deserted Haymarket; through Trafalgar Square, where, tall and stern, rose the victorious *genius loci;* and along the Strand, strangely silent. The policemen were beginning to feel the chill of the doubtful morning; and at the corners of dismal streets drunken women—what awful outcasts!—prostrate, yet not in worship, were the only beings to welcome the advent of the winged day. Edgar shuddered and hastened on. As he passed through the Temple Gate, he jostled against some one coming from the opposite direction. To whom should he apologize but to the stranger whom he had met at Glendover Abbey, and with whose name he was yet unacquainted.

"It seems," said the latter, "we are destined to meet in this abrupt manner; but we meet in a different scene. Time has not curbed your habits of meditation."

"The scene," said Edgar, "is my abode; and as we have stolen so much from the night, we had better make free with the rest—come. That is my name," pointing to one on the threshold.

"Edgar Huntingdon," repeated the other. "Mine is Gregson Woofinden; scarcely so euphonious or so historically interesting as yours."

"This way. You see my bachelor snuggery," said Edgar, lighting the candles, and remarking that the legal abodes did not get the benefit of day so soon as Glendover. "I prefer living here: I can do utterly as I like."

"And are your likes unchanged? Has the great city stunted or fostered your fervour and ambition?"

"I think you will find a great town the mother of eager and restless endeavours; and London is the she-wolf with the brazen dugs, the foster-nurse of many Romuluses."

"Then have you built your Rome already? I have not heard of it."

"Not quite; but just when I am laying the foundation and digging my ditch, I suppose you have come, like Remus, to jump over and sneer at it."

"Not I, indeed. I should be sorry to disparage any noble effort. But what have you done?"

"What I was doing when I ran up against you, five minutes ago—composed in the streets, as the humour takes me."

"And what do you intend to do with all this?" asked Woofinden.

"Publish it, by-and-by. It will be the first attempt. I merely want to know if I can write well; the rest I see must wait."

"Ah! my friend, if you will allow me to call you so," said Woofinden with a sceptical smile, "you try very bravely to de-ceive yourself. In your heart of hearts you fancy for your first-born a great success. You picture to yourself a frantic crowd, more numerous than that at the opera-house on an especial night, scuffling at your publisher's door for copies of your immortal poem. You see the fortunate coming out with perspiration and triumphant happiness on their faces, and Bond Street deserted for Paternoster Row."

Edgar woke the echoes of the chambers over-head with his violent laughter at this severe sally. There was humour in all this exaggeration, and no little truth, even if caricatured, in the picture drawn by this scoffing philosopher. He went on more seriously.

"What you *will* see, will be most of the copies of your exquisite book, that was to be the gem of drawing-rooms, the treasure of boudoirs, over which lovely maidens were to weep, and even veterans wax pathetic, adorning the patient shelves of the printer's back-room. When you visit your publishers, you will see a copy, and always the same copy, of your poem on the principal table. The *gentleman* of the firm will always receive you with the blandest of smiles, and a 'Pray take a seat, sir!' and he will smile and smile, and, as you will eventually think, be a villain."

"But," interrupted Edgar eagerly, "this will be the case at first, and probably according to my deserts. But I shall try again."

"Yes, I know you will. Even should Hope decrease, Pride will come to the rescue; and time, and money, and happiness, will be absorbed in the gaping desire that will never be satisfied. The bolder critics will ask, What nonsense is this? assert, flippantly, that it is neither rhyme nor reason; not poetry, but prose run mad; and that a boy in the sixth form would be whipped for ignorance of something which they have learned by accident, perhaps half-an-hour ago; and many other such witty things, which they have said of every man who has been fool enough to attempt to please anybody but himself. Minor journals will call your verses elegant, and of considerable promise; whilst others, who love a balance, will damn you with a sentence of 'buts.' If you have iron—cast-iron—feelings, try it. If you have wise ones, show your verses to the girl who loves you, and she will praise you, and kiss you, and be proud of you; and with this be satisfied." It was said with the intensest bitterness; but Edgar shook his head, and urged still—

"I am sure you take too harsh a view of things. I believe that critics—respectable critics—are, as Longfellow expresses it, the sentinels at the gates of literature, to challenge each new comer; and that they sincerely seek for worth, being the heralds of our prowess, and the trumpeters of our success."

"Say rather," Woofinden replied with a savage sneer, "that they are the lacqueys who howl out our names on the staircases of life, like the menials who bawled out yours to-night for the benefit of your host. This is *their* office."

"I cannot—I will not," persisted Edgar, "come to such sad conclusions. I believe that the world loves poetry, and that there are critics who love it still more intensely; and that, when they find it, they are overjoyed, and hasten to spread the welcome tidings. There are fields of literature yet unexplored; and I have faith that critics will hail with rapture the man who is fortunate enough to discover them."

"Then trim your sail, and be at your helm, and drive on in search, till you find yourself drifting into the regions of northern ice, when your bones will be picked by the wolves, your friends the critics."

All Edgar's naturally fiery and impatient nature was aroused. He struck the table fiercely, as he sprang up, and said—

"I *will* succeed, if I die in a mad-house!"

The candles died out in their sockets as he spoke. He drew up the blind: the sun was looking over the roof. Woofinden also rose; and gazing at Edgar, still glowing with his splendid burst of enthusiasm, said quietly—

"You will not die in a mad-house; but you will succeed nevertheless. I no longer doubt it."

Thus passed the night of the 14th, and the early morning of the 15th of June. Edgar had a bath, and walked to Hampstead, and at half-past nine was working in King's Bench Walk.

CHAPTER IV.

"And I am in the world alone."—Byron.

About a week later, Pampesterra came up with his daughter Catalina to London—that last refuge whither suffering finds either better days or death. The meeting between them and Edgar was a warm one: of gratitude on the one side, and on the other of satisfaction, such as always attends on seeing those whom we have benefited. The best and most devoted men, or even women, take at least "this unction to their souls."

Ten months had worked a striking alteration in Catalina. Daughter of a precocious clime, where everything matures with a rapidity almost unintelligible to northern imaginations, and where the year yields a double harvest, Catalina, at sixteen, had just reached the glorious eminence of perfect womanhood. Sorrow, too, I dare say, had had something to do with this early development; and as Edgar gazed, he confessed that such beauty as was hers he had never before seen. Poor Pampesterra likewise looked older; but with him the advance was not to the summer, but the fall of life. Edgar at once unfolded to them his plans. He had taken lodgings for them close to Regent's Park, in the direction of St. John's Wood, judging with a delicate attention that so fair a thing as the exile's daughter should not be imprisoned within the turmoil of the vast and seething city. The rooms, though comfortable, boasted no approach to luxury, unless a small library be considered one. Catalina for a long time could only look wistfully into Edgar's face. At last she took his hand and imprinted on it a kiss so intensely grateful that it was nothing more. And as for her poor father, he went over and over the three rooms with the tears running down his soldier's cheeks. At last he approached Edgar with emotion.

"O Mr. Huntingdon! why all this? A hovel in a back street would have sufficed; and that I would not have allowed you to bestow but for my daughter. If I felt less, perhaps I could express my gratitude. Heaven reward you, for I cannot."

"Oh, but you are going to do something for me. Can you drudge? See."

And Edgar produced some deeds which had to be engrossed, purposing thus to take away the sting arising from a sense of utter dependence. Work of this kind he could always obtain; and he would himself teach the Spaniard the technicalities to be observed in copying out those dry, tedious, pages. Beyond learning these, Pampesterra had but little difficulty. He knew English perfectly, having spent two or three years in this country during his youth. Never a sigh escaped him during the performance of this labour, at least in Edgar's presence. He worked as cheerfully as if he were writing some great and cherished book that was to earn for him immortality. But Edgar also promised, and hoped not without reason, again to obtain for him pupils, at once more constant and more profitable than the amateur ones of the University. As for Catalina, he promised that she should find herself engaged in more amusing pursuits as soon as she made herself a proficient English scholar. This she was gradually becoming; and my hero's heart felt much lighter and more at ease than when first, at college, he met that poor outlawed girl. He strove earnestly to induce Pampesterra to allow him to introduce some of his friends, that thus he and his daughter might have the benefits of society; but on this point the exile could not be persuaded to yield. He would not retain his full title, which was noble; he would not be known by a curtailed one; nor had he, he said, the spirits to converse with any one but his daughter and his benefactor. So Edgar desisted.

It was a dismal, drizzling afternoon, and London looked the picture of misery under its own peculiar incrustation of mud, as at the end of this, his first visit, Edgar drove back to King's Bench Walk. The fire had been lighted, although it was July; and Horace Cooper, who had not made his appearance at chambers for ten days, was sitting alone on the hearth, with his face buried in his hands.

"Hallo! Cooper! a pretty truant you have been. But—what on earth is the matter?"

Cooper looked up, and with a forced smile, answered, "The day is dark and dreary."

"Cheer up," replied Edgar, quoting from the same poem—

'Be still, sad heart, and cease repining;
Behind the clouds is the sun still shining:
Thy lot is the common lot of all;
Into each life some drops must fall,
Some days be dark and dreary.'"

"Oh! but Huntingdon," groaned Cooper, with the smile entirely vanished from his face, "into mine have fallen drops to the brim. I let it fall from my grasp—and it is—shivered to atoms!"

Edgar was petrified. This from Cooper! Cooper, the merriest of mortals; the soul of the chambers; the incarnation of reckless spirits."

"Horace," he said in a voice so soft it almost sounded like a woman's, "Will you confide in me?"

Cooper raised his head, and gazed at Edgar with his vacant eyes.

"Sit down by the fire—there—and I will tell you—all."

Again he buried his head in his hands; and as he spoke he seemed not to move a muscle.

"You know, Edgar, do you not, that I have not always been altogether what I should have been—that I have been what is called 'fast?' I had better call it wicked;

yes—that is the word. If it is any consolation to me, I have not been as bad as many. Thank God! I never, whatever else I have done, was the cause of virtue's first fall. No! not that; but I have sinned enough without it, though men—and I *was* one of them—speak lightly of these things. I told you of my engagement to Mary Linwood. As I live, from the first moment I saw her, I left sin behind. I showed you the place where we were to live; I was there, making final arrangements; I was told some one wanted me. It was"—he paused a little, though without moving—"a girl to whom I had been kind, as kindness is generally weighed in these matters. She had come to say good-bye. I knew she loved me, as such creatures do love; poor outcast! It was a sad parting for her, from her affection for me, because she suffered so. I bid her take hope—repent—be different—be pure. She wept! and how bitterly. I soothed her, as I best could, with my voice; yes, with my hands. As she was leaving me she said suddenly, pointing to the window, 'Look! who is that!' I looked, and saw nothing. But something there had been, and that something was—O God!—Mary Linwood!"

He raised his head, and stretching out a crushed letter, gave it to Edgar to read. It ran thus:—

"Even at this moment, when the present and the past are scarcely distinguishable by me,—when I see only a future blank, dreary and hopeless, I write you, O only loved-one of my heart! the last words you will ever read of mine. You know your guilt; you must know, now, that I was a witness of it.

How can I write it? Yet it must be written. Burning with the desire of your presence, and to witness how progressed the house which was to be at once our home and heaven, I arrived to see you giving to another embraces which you had sworn were for me alone. If your heart did not accompany them, your sin is even worse: either way, you deeply wronged me. How have I lost your love? It would be almost some comfort to know that I had erred against you. I should not then have had the sad thought that you are the more guilty because I am innocent. To seek me will be useless, and do not injure me further by pursuit. Nay, you may search, but you will search in vain. I have taken, and shall continue to take, every precaution against being discovered. I should know you; you would not know me. Your very coming to my place of refuge would only assist me to conceal myself more securely. I love you still too wildly to bear your presence: you will be happy in the love of her who has supplanted me. But why did you not find that out before—before I had given my heart, my life to you? O Horace! it was cruel—it was fearfully cruel! Farewell; you will always have the love, if you value the love, of the broken-hearted MARY LINWOOD."

The letter bore the Antwerp post-mark. Edgar returned it without remark.

"I am justly punished," said Cooper. "Yet, who could have foreseen that the very act, which was to close the gates on guilt, should close on happiness and for ever? Yes—but I am justly punished—yet—yet how fearfully!" He stood up. His face was sunken and dark, as if a great cloud rolled across it. "I must suffer—must I? Suffer. Edgar! I would die. How *can* I die? God in heaven—it is more than I can bear!" With a calmer look, he took some letters from his drawer and placed them gently on the fire, and stood watching them until they were entirely consumed—gave his hand to Edgar,—said, "Thank you! I shall be here to-morrow"—and departed.

Edgar sat long by the dying embers, listening to the dreary rain beating against the moaning windows, and brooding over the sorrow that dripped too on his own bewildered heart. Horace Cooper, the young, the strong, the buoyant, the admired, haggard within a fortnight—the weak, fainting, despairing wreck he had just gazed upon—the wretched—the broken-hearted! But what had he done to find this poor girl? He would ask, but not yet. He wandered out into the bespattered streets, and not till eight o'clock did he find himself at Garden Court, when he awoke to the fact that he had not dined, but had been walking two hours in the rain, without a purpose, and almost without consciousness—but grieving over the terrible fate which had overtaken Horace Cooper and Mary Linwood.

Fortunately, he found Etheridge and Hamilton at chambers very early the next morning. He simply told them that a great misfortune had befallen Cooper, but that they must not refer to it in any way; that it would be kindness to leave the wound to Time, at once the healing physician and the soothing priest!

Cooper came at his usual hour—pale, and certainly altered; but not presenting that utterly woebegone appearance he had worn on the previous day. Etheridge affected to receive him, in theatrical fashion, as the long-lost son. Hamilton tried hard to cheat him into an argument. Cooper did his best to look amused; said he had been a sad truant, but intended to make amends by severe application; sat down in his accustomed place, and wrote till five. Neither Etheridge's frantic attempts in the facetious and theatrical line, nor Hamilton's pertinacious loquacity, could give that pupil-room its former tone. No songs—no romps—no banter; the glory of King's Bench Walk was departed. Old Gower, Q.C., discontinued his complaints, and Trantham marvelled what had come over his noisy pupils, though he guessed where the drag was, from Cooper's emaciated face. The poor fellow seemed to work at law—a thing unknown before. He had Chitty, and Fearne, and Sugden open before him; but Edgar knew that his stricken friend's thoughts were far away. At first, he met his jaded figure and grief-worn, melancholy countenance, wandering spectrally through the ante-chambers of ball-rooms, of which he had been one of the chosen spirits. From these at last he disappeared, pleading ill health as an excuse for declining all invitations. Edgar saw his friend's side of the Duke of Wellington's portrait was empty, and not likely to be refilled. Society discussed Cooper's looks and his absence for a few weeks, and then rapidly forgot one who had forgotten it. The truth was known but to three people in the whole world—our hero, and the two sufferers in this sad catastrophe. Edgar could not but participate in the gloom; and he felt relieved as July came to a close, and the few remaining stragglers of fashion looked northwards, and the lights went out, and the ball-rooms were covered up, and the awnings taken down, and the 'Long Vacation' arrived. The day before he left London, he said to Cooper—

"What efforts have you made to find Mary Linwood?"

"Few, you will think. I travelled, night and day, for a week, right and left of Antwerp, and did not obtain a clue of any kind, and came back, seeing how altogether hopeless was further search."

"But her relations—her uncle and aunt, with whom you told me she lived?"

"I have not—I cannot tell them what she has written to me alone. They only know she has chosen to go away somewhere—for some whim or other, they suppose—

and expect her back every day. They never loved her, nor she them. They have always thought her eccentric; they being the most matter-of-fact people I ever knew. She has money, they say; and so are satisfied. Her fortune, about £4,000, was taken out of a mine in Ireland some time ago, and lodged with the Bank previously to being invested according to the terms of our marriage settlement, which was not yet drawn, and never will be now. It was under her own control. I discovered that she drew £500 four days before I received her letter, which was my first intimation of the truth."

"But the £500, was it in notes?"

"Yes. Some were changed here in town—that I discovered—and by her; and that clue was the last. It led to nothing. The rest were changed, no doubt, at the same time, but elsewhere. I have employed the police, and in vain, as I expected. No! God wills it. I shall struggle no more in that direction. You leave town to-morrow, do you not?"

"Yes. I wish you would come with me." He had often endeavoured to persuade the poor fellow to accompany him.

"No, no; I must stay, and sit among the ruins."

The next day Edgar left the great city behind him.

CHAPTER V.

"Sir! we had talk."—JOHNSON.

EDGAR spent the first three weeks of the long vacation at Afrel. His time he occupied by a final revision of his poem, which he was now resolved upon publishing, and in the indulgence of that exercise of body which so long a confinement in London had made both necessary and much desired. He had received a most pressing invitation to Fairfort Park, which he had gladly accepted. So he wrote one day to announce his intention, and the following one carried it into

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effect. The journey was stupid enough, the last fourteen miles being performed by posting. At last, the walls of Fairfort were in view; a winding gallop along a shaded avenue, and he leaped down, Frank's hand giving assistance and welcome.

"So glad to see you, old fellow! Only ten minutes to dinner. Come along."

Edgar dressed with a rapidity that reminded him and Frank of their speed in college days, when they had missed chapel four days running, and they made a push to be present on the fifth; while Frank rattled away, putting innumerable questions, and not waiting for them to be answered. The hasty toilet was completed, the bell rang, and Edgar found himself gone through a variety of salutations and introductions, and comfortably seated at dinner. The company consisted of Lady Allanroy, Lord

Fairfort's eldest daughter, as unlike her sister as is possible to conceive, save in a certain elegance of manner; her husband, an aristocratic, but stupid-looking man, a member of the Lower House, who never spoke in it, and very rarely outside of it; a Mr. Ponsonby, a rising young Whig; and an elderly, quiet, melancholy gentleman, who was introduced to Edgar as Lord Fairfort's brother.

"You seem no little improved, Mr. Huntingdon," said the noble host, "for your sojourn in the country. You were tolerably gay, during the season — much as I was myself, when young."

"Without the *éclat* which attended, I believe, your Lordship's spring-time of life."

"I am delighted you have come," said Lady Allanroy. "I have not heard a compliment since I came into the country; in fact, no one seems to be aware of the existence of such a thing. You have the complimentary tone of the great world. I ventured, the other day, to praise a speech of Mr. Ponsonby's, which I had not read, and he looked petrified with amazement."

"We do not, you perceive," said Mr. Ponsonby, "lack satire."

"But really, Mr. Ponsonby, I did *not* read your speech."

"I suppose," said Miss Fairfort, "this is all a plot, out of which to make political capital. We are all to read the speech—it is full of statistics. Sugar was the subject, Mr. Ponsonby, was it not?"

"No, Miss Fairfort; aloes."

"Then we must not put our fingers in it," exclaimed Frank. "We had capital sport to-day. Ponsonby did not bag a single bird—though he expended powder enough to have cleared all our preserves. I believe he fired once at a tame pigeon—though of course he denies it. Stick to politics, Ponsonby!"

The latter combated the idea of the pigeon, though confessing himself not much of a sportsman: and not much relishing Frank's quizzing, eagerly snatched at the mention of politics, and asked Edgar what were his opinions.

"I should not like to think they are yet formed: but I much fear they never will be. I doubt if I should make a good partisan. But my tendencies are conservative."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Frank, who was in one of his mischievous humours, and renewing the attack upon Ponsonby; "you see where the hearts of the rising generation are. Ponsonby is a thorough Whig.

He believes in all the articles of the Whig creed—that John Langton is the greatest man of all time—that A.D. 1165 is the great date of all history—that Macaulay is *the* historian, and Lord John Russell *the* statesman, and that the Whigs will have heaven exclusively to themselves. In fact, they purpose making a treasury-bench of it for the Russells and Elliotts, &c.: and Burke and such secondary luminaries will have the honour of sitting immediately behind them. It will be a fool's-paradise with a vengeance. Never mind, Ponsonby!" he added compassionately, "you will perhaps be offered a place in the excise by-and-by. There is time to repent. Be a Tory and a minister —or a Whig and an ultimate tax-gatherer."

Ponsonby could have held his own against any style of attack, but this flimsy banter of Frank's: against it he was powerless. And the young man kept up this light firing most of dinner.

Edgar heard Miss Fairfort sing that night for the first time. She was constant to the pianoforte—he to turning over music-leaves, and admiring with an honest but intense enthusiasm. Those sweet and touching tones invested her who sat there with an additional charm. Who does not own the enhanced power of woman, when she wields song for her sceptre?

The following morning Edgar was up and out almost with the sun. He pictured to himself with satisfaction the quiet stroll he was to have before breakfast over the domain of his broad-acred host. But no sooner had he gained the terrace than he heard his name pronounced, and by Miss Fairfort, who, book in hand, and the colour of the early morning upon her cheeks, looked the Egeria of the spot, risen to welcome him.

"You surprise me," said Edgar. "I flattered myself I was the only denizen about the walls."

"I had the same idea about myself: but I have outstripped you by at least a full half-hour. If you wish to have your stroll in peace, I will keep to my 'Lament for Adonaïs.'"

"Your companionship," answered Edgar, "will scarcely interfere with my peace. I shall rather consider it as a reward for my early rising. If you will be my guide where you must know all by heart, I will promise to admire with genuine sight-seeing spirit."

The scene before their view stood in need of no previous determination to be pleased. The terrace on which they stood, and which was laid out in innumerable flower-beds, the mingling of whose colours was a work of complete art, covered probably three acres of ground. Gradually from the terrace sloped an undulating sward for a quarter of a mile, until it halted by the margin of a small lake, as if stooping down to drink of its pellucid ripples. From the two extremities of this sheet of water, not in artificial order, but scattered in wayward groups, rose ancient monarchs of the glade, magnificent in form and height, with all their gorgeous autumn panoply and many-coloured banners glistening in the morning sun. It was a scene to awake the marvel of the most indifferent: but for a Poet, it was a scene to embrace, to worship, to be enamoured of, to hold mystic, yet to him how familiar companionship with—with which to exchange thoughts, nay, to mingle beings: to possess some faint shadow of the feeling with which the Eternal Poet, the Great Maker, gazed upon the beautiful world He flung into awakened space, and saw that it was good!

Miss Fairfort did not fail to notice the effect it produced upon her companion.

"I wish," she said, "that I could behold this scene as you do. I *enjoy* it—see how tame. I know that my appreciation is none, compared with the unfettered vision with which poets must behold it."

"Pardon me, Miss Fairfort, but you betray yourself to be a poet oftener than you think. Are not those some of Shelley's poems?"

"Yes; I hope you are not as scandalized at seeing me carrying them about as my sister is. I confess I have been both shocked and hurt at his utter and avowed unbelief; but I am sure that injustice from those who did believe, if it did not cause, at least strengthened it. Somehow, Mr. Huntingdon, these pious people are seldom charitable."

"That is quite a sentiment of mine. There was much reverence originally in Shelley's nature; and where there is reverence, religious feeling and belief may always be instilled. But we do not like our medicine or our theology in the most disagreeable form. My poor mother, I can remember, gave me my powders in strawberry preserve. But in dealing with Shelley, who was very much of a child, people wrapped up the pill of truth in insolence; so Shelley put it aside and went on disbelieving."

"He certainly is most offensive sometimes in his treatment of subjects we love and venerate."

"Yes," said Edgar, "whether he believed or not, silence would have been both wiser and nobler. But Shelley was a colt, wild and unbroken. They wished to catch him, but instead of offering him oats, and calling him with a gentle, soothing voice, they spread out their arms and shouted frantically; and so he tossed his defiant head and sped far away,—so far, Miss Fairfort, it is sad even to recall it. I fear that not unoften poets, to all of whom some religion is necessary, mistake their goddess Poetry for a higher divinity, and carve out of this material world their altar, proffering the incense of song, and worshipping only the Beautiful. It is a great and mournful mistake. Not so worshipped Dante, not so Tasso, not so the severe Milton. Pope never sneers at anything sacred, but writes his noblest work 'to vindicate the ways of God to man.' Chateaubriand listens with clasped hands, and bows his mighty head to the wisdom of the Infinitely Mighty.

Poor Shelley! I wish he could have believed. We might not then have had the Revolt of Islam, the splendid scorn, the terrific indignation, the inspiration of his wild prophecies, but we should have had a Christian, and the poor man would have been happy. And I cannot envy him who writes the greatest earthly song, but cannot see who has written the Great Poem which we behold around us."

His companion listened with rapt interest. She loved to hear his outpourings. She nearly always agreed with him. It was as though he were giving her thoughts, form, and utterance.

"Oh, Mr. Huntingdon!" she said earnestly, "if you should ever be a great poet—and I think you will be—remember this, and think as you think now. They have much to tempt them these great intellects. The screen rolls up, and they see the beautiful with unclouded gaze. They feel, really and palpably, something more exquisite than even religion can pourtray. They reverence intellect, but forget the First Intellect, of which their's is, if I may so speak, but a spark gone out—a falling star that heaven will never miss."

She, too, spoke eloquently. These two young people thought aloud to each other. It was a rare privilege this perfect converse, though they did not know its value, till time had not been overkind to either.

But to the happiest, to him who is even "dis carus ipsis;" such opportunities come seldom. Nor did my hero, and the companion who seemed so well to sympathize with him, enjoy another outpouring such as this all the time Lord Fairfort's other guests remained. Not seeking it, as of course they could not, they were not visited by it. The days were spent on the hills bagging game; the evenings in music and general discussion. At last the small party separated. Parliament was to meet in November that year, so Ponsonby was required in London. Lord Allanroy, taking his wife, went also—to sleep during the debates, and get into the wrong lobby at divisions. Lord Fairfort's brother departed as silently as he had remained. Edgar thought him strangely retiring—he would ask Frank. His visit was not yet quite over. . . . .

CHAPTER VI.

"Thus happily the days of Thalaba went by."
SOUTHEY.

"Friends meet to part."
The Giaour.

EVEN in London, during the season, Lord Fairfort spent little of his time in the centre of his family; yet there the imperious necessities of society made his presence, wherever Miss Fairfort was seen, generally indispensable. But when, the season over, he retired to his estates, he devoted himself almost exclusively, during the day, to their direction;

unless it so happened that the number of his guests demanded the sacrifice of his time and tastes. Edgar he considered as more especially Frank's visitor; and now that the rest had departed, whatever hours hung heavy on the hands of the two friends, they might, if so minded, spend in the additional society of his daughter. Save with occasional apologies, he seldom trespassed upon the amusements of these young people: it was the man's nature. Though not possessing a warm, he still proved that he had, when an opportunity strikingly presented itself, at least a kind heart; and was glad to see Edgar, an orphan, homeless, of promising talent, and his son's most intimate friend, passing his days thus quietly at Fairfort. The young men were still faithful to the sport which his Lordship's moors presented. Not unoften Miss Fairfort would accompany them to the hills, and even spend there, if the weather were propitious, her whole day, fortified, on a favourable eminence, with stout wrappers, and one of her chosen authors. This spot was the rendezvous for luncheon, and for counting the game at the close of the day's labours. Sometimes the hills were deserted for riding excursions, which Edgar proposed in order to relieve what he said must be the monotony of Miss Fairfort's occupations; though, I dare say, our hero was not making a very great sacrifice whilst honestly consulting the young lady's amusement.

Thus pleasantly glided away the weeks at Fairfort Park. The last afternoon came, as last afternoons will come, bringing with it a fluttering sensation of undefinable regret. The following day introduced Michaelmas term, and Edgar must return to Garden

Court. The young people set out on their farewell walk. It was as lovely an afternoon as even autumn ever knew, though the leaves were becoming fewer and fewer, and the branches showed half-bare with sad anticipations of winter; but those which yet remained had received a deeper and more lustrous tint; and on them the sun poured the smile of the last holiday of the year. "What a strangely quiet man your uncle is," remarked Edgar; "he has such a melancholy look. Has he suffered much?"

"It is difficult to tell," said Miss Fairfort. "Suffering cannot be measured by the known cause, or by the apparent effect."

"You mean, Annette, that suffering is an unknown quantity; at least, I don't know it; and I believe my uncle is much in the same plight. The fact is, he married, as they say, below him. His wife was snubbed by his relations, especially by the women, Annette included; but he pleased himself, however, I suppose, and is happy. He has, any how, attained the summit of bliss—judicious silence."

"You are very far from bliss, then," said his sister; "for you libel me for mere conversation's sake. Really, Mr. Huntingdon, I never knew my aunt; and certainly should not, to use Frank's ugly word, have snubbed her, or any other person. She died some years ago, leaving my uncle a daughter. After her death he was permitted to re-enter civilized society, and of course he bears it little love now, and is rather afraid of it. It was very hard; it——"

"But," interrupted Frank——

"No, sir! You cannot mitigate it with any amount of derisive 'buts,' or other form of sophistry. It *was* hard—it was cruel. I am sure his wife was a lady; for about a year ago I insisted upon my cousin coming to see me, and carried my point. And she was such a pretty, elegant, gentle little creature, I am sure her mother was a lady. And if she was *not* a star out of the perfect firmament of *haut ton*, could not my poor uncle please himself? *I* would, were I a man. You saw, Mr. Huntingdon, that his spirit is quite broken. It *was* shameful!"

Edgar had never heard her speak with such energy and indignation. The words came from her innermost conviction, like champions of the weak against the exacting injustice of society. He could not but gaze on her with delight, as her cheeks lighted up, and her eyes glistened with the fervour of her intense and ardent bravery.

"As you will," said Frank. "I give in.

At least, I have no intention of facing such a sentence as that. But I should think Mr. Fairfort is as happy as his neighbours. He got the woman of his choice—is not that the phrase, Annette?—and therefore would be happy. But perhaps you have discovered that, too, to be a delusion."

His sister smiled, and would have replied to his banter in her simple, sincere way, had not Lord Fairfort's steward overtaken them, and informed Frank that his father wished to consult him. This his Lordship constantly did, hoping thus to interest his son in the property which would one day be his own. A refusal or excuse would have deeply offended, so Frank was forced to leave his sister and Edgar to continue their stroll alone. About a mile further on, they sate down upon the stump of an old tree, directly facing the now declining sun.

The day was mild, and Autumn always tempts to lingering.

"Then you intend publishing your poem about Christmas?" asked Miss Fairfort. "When shall you begin to have it printed?"

"Immediately on my arrival in town. It is an experiment. What if I am very severely handled?"

"That is impossible. The passages you were so kind as to read to me were truly exquisite."

"I do not doubt your judgment, Miss Fairfort; but I allow for—may I presume?—your partiality."

"Certainly; but a partiality founded on your merits."

"I shall be very anxious."

"You are so already; it is but natural. Do you know I have a sort of fear lest, should you succeed, you should not be happy. How literary men have suffered! I always shudder when I think of Tasso—sweet Tasso—imprisoned as a madman; of Savage, and Collins, and Shelley, and many, too many others; of Byron shedding those tears in the garden at Ravenna, whose fearful bitterness we are powerless even to imagine: that beautiful and spiritual head grey at thirty-two, laid in the dust at thirty-seven! Can fame, fame even such as poor Byron's was, make up for the unfeeling wrong, relentless calumnies, and fiendish abuse with which he was assailed? Do you remember those words of his, which seem to be the index of his whole life? 'The blame of the meanest,' he says, 'has always given me infinitely more pain than the praise of the greatest has given me pleasure.' What an avowal! No poet had ever, during life-time, such renown as he; and this is his conclusion—as sad as Solomon's, and perhaps as true!"

"I thank you, my dear Miss Fairfort! most gratefully, for the generous interest you take in my possible future. But a price must be paid for everything; and I think the price for becoming a poet is somewhat of sorrow. He asks for the most valuable gift known to earth; he must make the largest sacrifice. The pillars of Hercules may be reached; but the Nemæan lion must be slain—the Minotaur battled with and vanquished. To reach the Holy Mountain, we must walk with bared feet, even if we are bruised."

"And yet," said his companion, thoughtfully, "perhaps the doom, or at least much of it, may be escaped. In many instances, the causes are assignable."

"Yes, in many, if not in all," Edgar

replied. "And that the doom may be partially avoided, it is necessary that a poet, should he marry, should have for his companion a gentle, loving, worshipping woman —a woman talented, indeed; but talented only to translate his thoughts, and reflect his feelings. She must cherish him, tend him, and be proud of him—think there is no one like him in the vast world; in fact, she must adore him, moving in her poet-mate's orbit simply as his satellite. Poets are gentle—are fond, by nature; but, of all things, they require to be intensely loved. There is much of your sex in them: they are jealous, almost savagely jealous, of affection. They give much; they require even more."

"It is too true; for I fear there are no such women. And what you say of poets resembling women is so correct, that I think it is out of that resemblance the difficulty and the misfortune arise. It makes the contrast, which we are led to think so requisite, almost impossible. I have often noticed that poets have invariably found their truest friends in men—men who have loved them, as men generally love women. They seem to excite the same interest, and win the same worship."

"All that is also remarkably true: but you must pardon me if I persist in thinking that there are women such as I have described. If there are not, poets must be miserable to the end of the chapter—and there's an end of it. Or they had better remain single, and, to use Wordsworth's splendid image, be like stars, and dwell apart. But if the poet does marry, and chooses for his helpmate a woman strong in the assumed consciousness of her own unsurpassed talents, so satisfied with her own abilities that she uses them simply as a foil to her husband's, treating as a common gift a thing so sacred that proud should be the woman to whose whole guidance it is entrusted, O, then, that woman has abused her privilege, forfeited her opportunities, and betrayed her splendid trust, blasted the yearnings of a gentle heart, and changed the disposition of a loving poet into that of a fearless tiger, facing the world, and daring it to the struggle. Poor Byron! they did so with him." He spoke almost savagely. "My curse on the women that have so done, or shall ever do!"

"Indeed it is fearful," said Miss Fairfort, with more calmness but equal solemnity, "to reflect upon these magnificent lives wrecked utterly by the selfishness and vanity of one person. Poets are much like children—impulsive, but always generous: easily humoured, but with an instinct of contradiction ever ready. They have the intellect of the Seraphim—they want a Cherub's love to guide them. And, after all, it is better to put down the pen and suffer obscurity than be the defiant man you have so forcibly described."

Why did Edgar's face so suddenly change colour, though but for a moment? She who sat beside him noticed it not, and had all a maiden's quiet self-possession. And in the autumn sunset they walked leisurely home, Edgar talking to her of his plans for the ensuing months, and enquiring what commissions he could execute for her in the great city, whither he should depart on the morrow.

When Edgar retired to his own room that night he somehow seemed not inclined for sleep, but sat staring rather vacantly for two hours at the fire. What he was thinking of all that time it might be difficult, and, I fear, no less tedious to tell. At last he jumped up abruptly, tossed the hair back from his forehead, and walked about the room, indulging in a *vivâ-voce* soliloquy.

"There must be an end of this. So sudden, and utterly unexpected. I have always liked the girl—who wouldn't?—but never, I am sure, till she spoke so this afternoon had I this confounded feeling. Bah! what an impressionable fool to be so transformed by half a dozen words, spoken as innocently as a morning salutation. A pretty fancy indeed!" and he looked at himself in the glass, with a whimsical expression of face. "You aspire, young gentleman! A girl—a goddess—to win whom the highest in the land might even humbly petition—and will *have* to do it, too—to be thought of by you, sir! a would-be poet! Give place, I say." And again he threw himself into his chair before the fire. "She certainly is the sweetest, dearest girl I ever met—but then I've known that for a long time. The more lucky I to have met her at all—but what then? No, no; I don't feel anything of the sort—I don't love her—I wont love her. The idea of gazing up at such a height from such a lonely, lowly place! Who ever heard, thought, dreamed of such a thing? Ha, ha! confound it! I shall wake Frank if I don't mind, and he'll be coming in to see what's the matter. I'm glad I'm going to-morrow—nothing like work. Half-past two, and I have to be up early. To bed, then, to bed."

It was a dismal morning. At breakfast Lord Fairfort was most pressing in his invitations to Edgar to spend Christmas with them. He thought of the loneliness which at that time especially the young man otherwise would feel with no home to go to; and was pleased to think he could offer some substitute. Moreover, his Lordship fancied the quiet, gentlemanly, yet always cheerful manners of my young hero. Between the departing guest and Miss Fairfort the last clasp of the hands seemed warmer and the last adieu more sad than they had been as yet before. The traveller wrapped himself in his rug, looked a final farewell, leaned back, and the carriage started down the long winding avenue. Fairfort Park was soon left in the far distance, and Edgar Huntingdon to his own thoughts.

As for the fair young denizen of those now all but deserted halls, she had never passed so stupid a morning. Shelley was uninteresting, Tennyson tiresome, Rogers was a bore; Byron appealed more powerfully, but even he was soon laid aside for that little private volume which we sometimes take out secretly and read,—the unbound book, with the melancholy tear-blotted pages—the pages of the heart!

CHAPTER VII.

"Tell this soul, with sorrow laden, if, within the
distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden."

EDGAR ALLAN POE.

THE following day Edgar called at King's Bench Walk. He found Cooper sitting over his books, just as when he had left him nearly three months before. It seemed as if he had never stirred from that spot, from that position, the whole time. The figure was perhaps more bent, the face thinner, the voice more subdued, even than before.

"You surely have not been in London all 'the Long?'"

"Yes!" he replied. "I have been here every day: I am an accomplished lawyer now."

"Is there no hope, Horace?" inquired Edgar tenderly.

"I have never looked for it. Oblivion, not hope, is my research; and yet one is as vain as the other." Then a smile half played about his mouth, in a sickly, doubtful manner. "I must strive for a judgeship, or—" he paused a little—"a grave!"

"Strive for the former rather. The same Providence that has chastised may relent."

Cooper made no answer, but again bent over his books, as if he had told his friend all that there was to tell after so long a separation. This, then, was the epitome of twelve weeks' solitude!

On the mantelpiece was a copy of Longfellow's "Hyperion." Edgar took it up. It was blotted with tears; and the page whereon Paul Flemming transcribes the words he found written in a village chapel, was almost illegible from the scalding drops which had fallen upon the imaginary, from the depths of the real, sorrow. When strong men weep, and forget, or care not to hide, the traces of such a weakness, broken must be the heart, and unnerved the will indeed!

When the afternoons were bright, Edgar would get him away from chambers. At first he manifested great reluctance; and when at last he yielded, it was as though he had forfeited all volition. They would go into the Park, which, though comparatively deserted, was by reason of Parliament being this autumn assembled, more frequented than is usual at that period of the year. Cooper would lean over the railings, silently and half vacantly staring at the passers-by. He would start and tremble at times, as a fair girl dashed past on horseback, or leaned forward in the heavy old family carriage. Edgar would seem not to notice it, but would lead him on into Kensington Gardens, and sit with him as the sun set behind the branchless desolate trees, trying, the gentle Samaritan, to interest the sufferer in the sober dying-out of the year.

"Yes, you know not," Cooper would say, "how I enjoy in my way. There is a something sympathizes with me from out those dead leaves. The earth has been widowed, too, and I feel as though we were soothing each other."

"But spring," suggested Edgar, "will return."

"Oh, that is what I dread! I can bear

this, but to see the flowers and foliage come back, and to hear the birds with their joyous marriage-notes restored, and for *her* not to return! O Edgar! I should like the long grass to wave above me before then."

"Wait, wait," said his companion solemnly. "Patience will almost bring the dead to life. I would not be harsh with you, Horace, but you own you have, in your strong youth, sadly erred. You *must* endure the chastisement, so bear it penitently. These may seem cold, comfortless words; but the hand of sorrow that presses so heavily on you, has bound down the young and the strong before; and some of these have not seemed to wander from the right as you own to having wandered."

"Oh, yes, it is true—all true—true as that I sit suffering here. I will try to endure—I will try. I have sat up in my bed many a night, wiping away the cold sweat, whilst I prayed that I might forget or die. Then I resolved to search for her" (he never mentioned her by name now) "round and round the world. But morning came, and I saw my folly—my midnight illusion; and I went down to King's Bench Walk, and—nay, I know not what I did." Then with agony he broke out—"Oh! it's terrible to be bound thus, with the vulture gnawing at one's heart."

"Will you travel? I will go with you," said the generous young fellow.

"I thought you knew those verses of Byron's to Ianthe better. Don't you remember—

'What exile from himself can flee?'"

"True," replied Edgar, mechanically repeating the same idea from an older versemaker—

"Cælum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt."

For there was a gentle power in Cooper's melancholy objecting, the augmentative force of which his companion could not overcome. Many an afternoon like this did our hero devote to the noble endeavour to cheat the sufferer of his grief; much did he deny himself—even the working for his own advancement, when he saw the least chance of soothing that aching heart. Cooper never thanked him for—nay, seemed not to be aware of—these manifold attentions; but was obeyed and led by him like a child, or, rather, like a somnambulist. Edgar thought nothing of this, only redoubling his kindness; and in a few weeks began to hope that the troubled waters were becoming at least more still, though over them floated Regret with its leaves pale and placid!

His poem was already in the press. Many

of his acquaintances, some tacitly, others more avowedly, did their best to disenchant him of his literary hopes. But my hero was not one whose purpose is lightly laid aside in deference to the patronizing fears of scepticism, or even the well-intentioned doubts of really anxious interest. It was one of his favourite maxims that he who cannot brook evil prophecies deserves not success, and will assuredly not obtain it: nor, moreover, was he unconscious that the greater part of these prudent counsellors would be, in case he did succeed, the very first to aver that they always knew Edgar Huntingdon was sure to get on. So these he utterly disregarded. Nor minded he much more that large class of worthy people who would have convinced him that even success, such as he desired, would be the very worst fate that could possibly befall him; inasmuch as it would seriously injure, if not destroy, his prospects at the bar. This idea is, if I mistake not, an almost universal one. Strange, certainly! Many if not most of our successful legal men have been authors of no contemptible standing. I could name a pretty long list; but the hereditary prejudices of Englishmen are too powerful, and have too much *vis inertiæ*, to be much affected by argument. And to the end of the chapter, verse-making will be deemed "duty broken," and "an idle trade" by "parents disobeyed." But young men will have their prejudices, too; and Edgar Huntingdon had his, which he indulged by publishing a poem. He had given it to Catalina Pampesterra to transcribe. With her, this was a labour of love; every verse of her benefactor seemed unmatched by any other. Ah! if our author could have found many readers of this frame of mind, he had been already of no little importance. Catalina was in nothing altered. But her father evidently wasted under his deplorable exile. His daughter complained to Edgar that she could not make him take any exercise; that he would sometimes sit for hours in silent abstraction, and when he awoke from his long reverie, he would pour out upon her all his fondness, as if to repair his unwitting negligence: "And that," said the poor girl, "pains me most of all."

Edgar asked if Pampesterra could play chess, and was pleased to hear it was the only game the exile thoroughly cared for. So the young man, pleading want of society at this dull time of the year, asked permission to spend his evenings at St. John's Wood. It was one of those untruths so glorious, that to it may well be applied the words of Horace —"*splendidè mendax!*"

Pampesterra was rejoiced; so many an evening now found Huntingdon on his way to the exile's lodgings. Sometimes they would return the visits to Garden Court; and whilst the antagonists were bent upon their friendly rivalry, Catalina would look into Edgar's books, and wonder why a poet read such stupid things about contracts, and would put his room in order after her ideas, thinking what a sloven this kind young Englishman was. And thus my hero devoted the time after law hours to Horace Cooper and the exiles. He did not write at present—though often the *furor scribendi* was strong upon him—in order that he might restore one shattered heart, and prop two others that, thank God, were not yet utterly undone.

Christmas was close at hand; and our poet was, at last, satisfied with the proofs. Oh, that correction of proofs! You come to detest every single word you have penned. It was all very well in Horace's time, when no such method had been invented whereby to cure authors of their conceit, to lock up works for nine years; now, that is utterly uncalled for. Printing has settled that question, as it has settled innumerable others. You read over and over and over, till every verse sings like a stupid old nursery rhyme. And, then, the monsters that are made of your favourite ideas! I understand, now, what Job meant when he wished his enemy would write a book. He must have had in mind the tortures his foe would have to endure from the relentless hand of printers. Let no critic here accuse me of a gross anachronism, for I am fully aware of it, as no doubt you, dear reader, are also.

The snow was thick round King's Bench Walk, and faster came the falling flakes as Edgar made his way to Trantham's pupil-room. He met Etheridge at the threshold.

"Hallo, off already!"

"In half an hour. Wish this confounded snow would thaw and dissolve itself into a dew. I want some hunting, old boy! this law dries up one's marrow so—and we've all got so studious of late. I've just been saying good-bye to Cooper; I never saw any one so altered. He used to drive me distracted with his noisy merriment; now, he gives me the blue-devils. He must have come in for it, rather."

"He has suffered fearfully," Edgar replied solemnly; "but I must not moralize now; so good-bye, and merry Christmas."

"The same—and success to the poem!"

Cooper was huddled up before the fire. He would be here likely enough on Christmas Eve. Here! whilst outside and all around him, green and holly would be carried about, and mistletoe hung up, and not unwilling maidens be kissed beneath its propriety-dispelling favour. Here! whilst merry fires would blaze out, yielding only in brightness to the happy human faces. Here! whilst children would be singing carols of the Saxon days, and praying God-spede at the jovial Christmas-tide. Here! perhaps the only inhabitant, that eve, of this spot, which the most persistent lawyer had abandoned; hearing no chimes, listening to no carols, receiving no "peace on earth," brooding over his own utter, irremediable wretchedness, eating into his own heart, sleepless, companionless!

Edgar took his hand, and begged him to leave London.

"You see I am calm," he answered; "perhaps I cannot be said to suffer. I am numb, I barely feel. I sit here, not even thinking, but merely sitting here: it is enough. If you took me away, and made my pulse hasten on again, and showed me what others are doing, grief would return—bitter, active, resistless grief, violent as you once saw it—grief I *cannot* bear."

Edgar was at sea. He had exhausted his inventive generosity; he could do, could suggest, nothing more. He must bow his head to that God who had, if so fearfully, yet so justly smitten Cooper for his sins; and trust and pray that the lost one might yet be found, love renewed, and vengeance satisfied!

CHAPTER VIII.

> "One . . . .
> Whom to gaze on was to love."
> *Locksley Hall.*
>
> "These are good rhymes."
> MR. POPE *to his Son.*

FAIRFORT PARK was full of visitors when Edgar arrived, in accordance with his promise, to spend there his Christmas. Frank had done his best to prepare for him a reputation—a doubtful sort of kindness, after all; since it only raises expectations which are generally too great not to be disappointed. He had brought with him the first copy of his poem, which he presented to Miss Fairfort. The general curiosity about its merits prevented the possibility of her at present perusing it; and it was finally demanded with a unanimous voice, that Edgar should read it in full conclave. If there was one thing he usually avoided more sedulously than another, it was reading aloud his own compositions; but refusal was out of the question, and evasion equally impossible. So he gave way with as good a grace as he could well assume. As a matter of course, he received little but the most undiscriminating praise, which he was wise enough not to value over highly; and all the flattery here bestowed was, I fear, completely wasted, with the exception of one little tear which, at the close of a canto, he saw, or fancied he saw, glisten from the drooping eyelid of Miss Fairfort. Yet he would, I think, have made some considerable sacrifice not to have seen that innocent tear which, be it confessed, was not alone in that company, where she was not the sole sensitive listener. For that tear only strengthened the more a feeling he was bent on combating. No sooner had he again come across this young lady than, to his intense annoyance, he felt very much as he had felt that autumn afternoon, two months ago, when he had walked home with her in the blaze of sunset. The house was, as I have said, full of guests; so there had not passed between them one single word but had been spoken in the presence and hearing of at least a dozen witnesses. Yet, the being in the same neighbourhood as this beautiful and high-born girl somehow stirred up sensations, which he would not allow to be those of incipient fondness, but which he was obliged to confess, were they not such, he was somewhat senseless in opposing. The honest fact is, he had taken alarm at what were, deny it to himself as he might, the first unmistakeable symptoms of a well-known disease, with a good, old, simple Saxon name, and that name Love. Do what he would, seek her or shun her, miss her or meet her, it was nothing with him but one constant, wearisome struggling with himself. He was at a loss. He could not be distant with her—it would be remarked; besides, it would be unjust, ungrateful, and impertinent. Yet he feared to continue with her upon such familiar terms as those which he had hitherto enjoyed. Yes—he knew what he would do; he would leave Fairfort—he was better away. He should not see her again, in all probability, till May; and if he could not, removed from her presence, tread down by then the mere beginnings (supposing such they were) of affection, well then—shame on him for a weak craven! So he reasoned. He was summoned up to town, he said, and must obey. Every one seemed to regret it; but he had come to his determination not without long thought, and he went; no one, not even Frank, imagining that the real reason was not the one openly avowed.

On the Saturday after his return to town, there appeared in the most influential weekly journal devoted to literature, a notice of his poem. He had reason to be proud of its commendation; for this review had always maintained, and to this day continues to maintain, in its judgments the highest and sternest standard of excellence, and its praise was proverbially difficult to obtain. It spoke of Edgar's poem as nervous, vigorous, and picturesque; of the similes as original and judicious; of the author as evidently capable of producing something better. It pointed out the fault of occasional obscurity, and remarked upon the shapelessness of the plot. Here, then, was sober criticism: kind and encouraging, but partaking of anything rather than the undiscriminating character of the Fairfort Park acclamations. A bi-monthly journal, of scarcely less repute, was perhaps more complimentary still, and was more liberal in its quotations. Others, in less prominent, but withal highly valuable quarters, appeared to satisfy the young author. On the whole, he had much reason for congratulation. It falls to the lot of few first productions to be noticed so favourably. He felt that he had now, at least, gained for himself an introduction, and the right to be heard hereafter. There were not a few who would look forward with interest and anxiety to his second attempt; and, having been so unhesitatingly assured that he could write *poetry*, he would now sit down and write a *poem*.

The acquaintances from whom he received perhaps the soundest criticism were poor Horace Cooper and Gregson Woofinden. The former he found, on his first visit to King's Bench Walk after leaving Fairfort Park, deeply occupied with the new poem.

"I bought it the other day," Cooper said, "and have been delighted with both its tender and its passionate outbursts. I think they are helping me to endure. But how is it that such a melancholy vein runs through almost every page? You might have suffered even as—yes, more than I have; yet no one would guess it."

"My dear Horace! there is a sort of suffering that is never seen—and it is the worst of all. But we will not talk of that: many have made the same remark; and were I willing to explain what so puzzles them, I should have to display an amount of egotism that would be simply insufferable. People must be satisfied with verses: it is unreasonable to expect a key to them."

"But you must get rid somehow of this melancholy brooding, or give up all idea of success. You have not studied what the world wants. In this age of novels, dramatic power, though not in the accepted dramatic form, must enter into poetry: the old must combat the new romance with the new weapons. There is such a fascination about these interwoven plots, which are the foundation of modern tales, that he who discards them, no matter under what form he writes, must be satisfied with few, very few readers. I do not mean you should write metrical novels: that would be desecrating the noblest path of literature. Come to me when you compose again. *I* will give you a plot when you are at a loss."

Round to the old story. Edgar had listened to his companion's remarks with evident delight, not so much for their truth—though that he acknowledged in them—but that he who spoke seemed to be forgetting for awhile, in the interest he took in his friend's literary career, the sorrow at his own heart. But see—he returns to his own woe, and clings to it as faithfully as ever.

"What did you do on Christmas day?" Edgar asked.

"I went to church and was not consoled. The following day, came here and read Chitty, and was no wiser. Let fall a few weak tears, but my heart was no lighter: 'Que sert, hélas! d'arroser le feuillage quand l'arbre est coupé par le pied?'" And he turned to his desk again. "Poor child! poor child!" He often uttered exclamations like this last, now: Edgar knew well of whom he was thinking.

A few days later, Woofinden called upon him, with the poem in his hand. He had read it over three times, he said—some passages much oftener. Our hero was touched with something very like affection for this rather severe, unsparing man, as he thought of the kindly, spontaneous interest thus displayed in his behalf.

"This ought to have been a poem," Woofinden began, "which, let me tell you, at present it is not. Nay, don't bite your lip; I am not going to be severe. It is poetry, and poetry of no mean order—a poem it certainly is not. A little more care, my young friend, and this book might have made you. As it is, it does not deserve very great success. I have read the critiques of it, and I tell you candidly that they praise you as liberally as honest reviewers possibly could. Even *I* will confess that these notices"—and he produced them—"are both just and generous."

"But," interposed Edgar, "I have obtained all that I desired—the assurance that I can write, and the certainty of being listened to on a future occasion."

"Well, if you are satisfied, who shall complain? Yes, *I* will. You are to succeed—that I know—that I have told you. And the man who has the stuff in him out of which may come success, has no right idly to squander his material. There are innumerable lines in this book that ought to have remained long in people's minds: you have absolutely thrown them away. You say you are contented with being assured that you can say fine things; but how much better if you had taken two steps instead of one. People are generally, and ought to be, gentle with a first attempt; and your first attempt is highly creditable. Nay, I don't want to flatter you, or I could use more honied language, and still be within the truth. But I give you this as my frank opinion, that a second performance such as this will damn you hopelessly, or certainly should do. You must get out of that mischievous way of composing anywhere and anyhow, as the humour comes upon you. It may be a very delightful occupation — anything but a profitable one. Don't write a line till you know thoroughly what you want to say, from beginning to end. Ornamentation will come without your seeking it; the foundation you must dig with your own hands. We will have a poem yet."

Edgar thanked this sound, honest critic, exacting from him a promise to do for the *poem*, when it was written, but before it was printed, what he had done for his *poetry* after it was printed, and it was too late to alter or destroy it.

"Don't talk of destroying, my dear fellow! You have not done, this time, all you might have done; and that's all. And, when all has been said, I am free to confess I never think hopefully of a young man whose *art* is already perfect."

Edgar now settled down again to his usual pursuits. The hours devoted to law were extended. Our pupil-room in King's

Bench Walk had become the quietest and most industrious in the Temple. The first three months of the year passed uninterrupted by any event which need be chronicled in these pages. In the first week of April, Cooper had not made his appearance for three days. This was the more strange as, for seven months, he had not been absent one single day. Edgar was just starting for Pall Mall, where Cooper lodged, when he received a note begging him to go at once to the writer, who was ill.

Ill indeed he was; ill from the long mental agony he had now undergone for nearly a whole year. Disease, the doctor said, there was not; and having been told by Edgar, in confidence, something of his patient's sad story, expressed his conviction that it was a case in which medical skill has but little potency; that he could perceive no danger, in the ordinary sense of the word; but that, together with the young man's assistance, he would use every means to restore the sufferer's strength, which was now reduced to the very lowest point. Were they successful, Cooper must then leave London, and have change of scene. To all this Edgar listened patiently, and shook his head. He did not think his friend would die—he could not bring himself to desire this consummation, but he felt that the poor suffering fellow stretched out on yonder bed would know no better days this side the grave. All that gentleness and generosity can do, Edgar did. He brought his law-books, and studied as he best could, whilst the invalid slept; when he awoke, this patient watcher would read to him, talk to him, pray with and for him, and perform innumerable slight offices which we are wont to think women alone can do. When they do these things, we reckon nothing of it; we have grown accustomed, even to indifference, to all their tenderness; but when men execute such duties, it does seem as though they were approaching very near to the angels.

At times, Cooper did not recognize his friend; on the ninth day of his illness, his mind evidently wandered; at last, there came delirium; and this, for him who sat in the sick room, was the hardest trial of all. All that he could do now was to watch, and sometimes weep—for he could not wholly repress his tears, it was so sad. Let us pass away from it.

What a terrific retribution it was! and yet, what a just one! The career of sin run—repented of—passed; the better, purer days at hand; the last scene just drawing to a close; the curtain about to fall; but instead, and when in another minute it had been too late, vengeance! Where was she who was the instrument and the sharer alike of this inscrutable scourge? Was she, too, suffering? and like this? Were she permitted for an instant to enter that room, and see that wasted, delirious form but a second, the torment might be removed! Wondrous Providence! that by a thread can hold eternities apart, two souls which sympathy declared, and still declares, to be but one!

The day on which Cooper's delirium was at its height, Edgar had witnessed a scene, and held a conversation that, brief as they were, had brought home still more strongly to him the sad events consequent upon that fatal day which had initiated his stricken friend into sorrow. Towards the dusk of evening, as he was returning to Pall Mall, a woman sitting huddled up on the door-step prevented his entrance. He asked her to rise. No sooner had he spoken than the figure started up convulsively, and seized his arm, exclaiming in a wild tone—

"Oh! is it you? is it you? Thank God! Tell me—tell me—will he die? Speak! for Heaven's sake! will he—will he die?"

Her very existence seemed to hang upon the response. She had been once a lovely—she was even yet a beautiful woman. Yes, standing though she did with her youth far behind her, though her years were fewer than those of him whom she addressed thus passionately. She wore what had once been finery. Like its wearer it was merely a recollection, a wreck, telling a complete history.

"Do you mean Horace Cooper?"

"Do not madden me—yes, yes—will he —tell me—will he die?"

"I trust not," said Edgar, in a tone which was scarcely hopeful.

"Oh! if he should die! if he should die! I have watched you—you watch over him. Surely he has told you all—all. I—I am the woman who has caused all this."

And in a wild wail of weeping, she hurried away, leaving him transfixed with horror. This, then, was the woman: this was Emma. This was, first the instrument of sin, and then the instrument of bitterest amercement.

In the midst of all this, Pampesterra, too, became invalided. Edgar had been forced of late to discontinue his visits to St. John's Wood; and, with his absence, the Spaniard's low spirits, Catalina wrote, had returned. Debility followed, and then almost helplessness. At least, he could no longer work or receive his pupils. When he sank to a certain point he halted there, becoming, despite medical skill, not better, not worse. The doctor's bills were heavy, and Edgar had to pay them, which he did cheerfully enough.

But it fell heavily now upon this generous young benefactor. His allowance, as I have already said, was, as yet, very limited. Upon his certain expectations he could have raised far more money than was requisite to defray every expense; but such things were not in Edgar Huntingdon's disposition. And perhaps it was well for him, while Cooper slept, and early in the morning and late into the night, to have to write for the magazines which paid him best, that the poor Spaniard might not want what he could no longer work for, and the heavy doctor's bills might be discharged. It was perhaps a blessing sent wisely that he should thus learn at some period of his life, the duty of drudgery, the heroism of hard work, the true nobility of stern, unfavoured labour; for in his private behoof he would never have allowed that independent intellect to stoop. But for the sake of others, who knew it not, he slaved on mechanically, writing without an author's sense of pleasure—that sweetest of all rewards. Nor did it seem probable that this state of affairs would soon cease, for life and death appeared to have made an armistice, and neither wholly claimed Pampesterra. The beautiful Catalina at last began to look paler, but managed to maintain her spirits outwardly, with all a woman's exclusive courage.

One afternoon, towards the end of April, when Edgar sat writing in Pall Mall, Cooper, who had been now in a rambling, now in a delirious state, for the last fortnight, awoke quietly from a ten-hours' sleep, and asked what day of the month it was.

"The 24th of April," said Edgar.

"Is it? I don't remember anything since the 9th—I think. Have I slept all this time? How weak I feel!"

Edgar's eyes brightened at the voice of returned consciousness. He rose, and approached the bed. "I dare say you do feel weak. You have not been sleeping exactly—you have been ill, and have talked sad nonsense sometimes."

"You mean I have been delirious? But I have had such a sweet sleep just now. I was dreaming, I suppose: I was with her, and I explained all, and we were married. But—yes—I was dreaming."

He had never spoken so calmly since that wet, miserable day on which Edgar had found him huddled over the fire in King's Bench Walk, and had listened to his appalling narrative. Slowly, but still markedly, he now grew stronger, and it would seem, more resigned. His voice was very low; his movements strangely gentle; everything about him was so subdued. But he would listen to the news of the day; now, taking an interest in the world without. Despite his winter prophecy, he improved with the sunny days.

About the middle of May, one bright afternoon, two young men were driving in an open carriage through Hyde Park: one carefully wrapped up, even at this mild season of the year, and wearing that interesting look with which illness always invests the handsome; the other with a perhaps yet paler countenance, yet on which thought, not delicacy, had fixed its impress, adjusting, with even a woman's care, the folds of his companion's multifarious coverings, whenever they left the invalid too much exposed to the almost summer air.

"Lord Fairfort has quite made up his mind. He has written to me himself, and expressed the strongest desire to visit Afrel and Glendover. I meet them on the 29th. I fancy Frank will be in town before then."

Edgar had said so much about Afrel that his friends at Fairfort Park were determined, previously to their coming up to town, which, from some whim of his Lordship's, they never did till late in the season, to visit this spot with him, who so vaunted it, for their guide. Of course compliance was, on Edgar's part, *de rigueur*. He had not, it is true, wished to meet Miss Fairfort under such circumstances again so soon. Yet, after all, why need he be alarmed? had he not fully conquered? Why, he had worked most diligently, both for himself and for others, during the five months which had elapsed since he had last seen her; and he could say honestly that of late she had not entered into his daily thoughts save in the garb of a maiden, gentle, beautiful, and thankfully remembered. Was not his heart fully at peace? And, moreover, what choice was there? Absolutely none. "Bah!" said he, "we shall have the pleasantest time of it: and I will make Cooper go—Lord Fairfort has written that he shall be delighted to see any one I choose to bring; and I shall attend to the poor fellow the whole time. So, there will be no danger—and I certainly shall be glad to see the dear girl again."

"One thing," Edgar continued to his companion, "we have made up our minds about—namely, that you are to be one of the party; so discussion is useless. You know you cannot resist *bodily*."

Cooper seemed almost gratified.

"You are all more than kind—and I will do, Edgar, what you wish! But I shall be a sad stumbling-block. Do not anticipate any enjoyment."

"Oh, but I do—and you shall enjoy also."

On the 28th of May, Pampesterra was leaning on Edgar's arm in Regent's Park, watching the bright glow of the setting sun.

"I shall not be away more than a week," said the young man.

Not more than a week? Indeed! I

think, Edgar Huntingdon, that four more suns will see you not very distant from the spot on which you now are standing!

CHAPTER IX.

"Where rose the mountains, there for him were friends."
Childe Harold.

As Edgar had anticipated, Frank came up to town, and accompanied him and Cooper on their journey. The rain fell in relentless torrents all the way, and, *luctabile dictu*, was still falling as, late in the evening, the travellers reached Afrel, where Lord Fairfort and his daughter had already arrived. As was natural, Edgar looked the portrait of bitter disappointment; the young lady was but little less dejected. His Lordship laughed, and read the paper. Frank tried in vain to be philosophical; poor Cooper tried in vain to be otherwise. All that they could do was to watch the mist creeping stealthily along the rocks that rose upon the hills like an army of war-and-weather-beaten camps. At times, the White House, the shrine of the famous Well, looked out into the grey twilight, and was again buried in the rolling clouds.

"Never mind, Mr. Huntingdon," said Miss Fairfort encouragingly; "come what will, I for one, will to-morrow discard fear and umbrella, and 'bear the pelting of the pitiless storm' as far as the White House."

"Bravo! nothing like bravery; but I do pray yours may not be put to the proof."

With ejaculations of a similar nature, they went to rest. About five o'clock the next morning, Edgar woke. Did he dream? Or—was not? Yes surely! there was sunshine on the curtains. He jumped up hastily, threw on his dressing-gown, rushed frantically to the window, and opened it on as glorious a day as ever came up from behind the Afrel hills. Upon the southern slope before him, shone out the Well, dazzlingly white. The larks were just starting upwards, trilling joyous matins to the morn. He could hear the delighted music, nay, he could see the tremulous sparkling of many a mountain stream, as they bounded along between their banks of heather. Another sound, considerably less musical, arising from the opening of an adjoining lattice, grated on his ear; and Miss Fairfort, evidently fancying herself the only one of the party yet awake, and bent on the same anxious errand as himself, her cloak thrown over her shoulders, and her long hair falling in a happy negligence that defies all the competition of more studious art, looked out. They had stumbled on each other too fairly for either to beat an absurd retreat; so, with congratulations on the good auspices of the glorious sunrise, and mutual assurances, accompanied with the most uncontrollable merriment, that they had never seen each other to such striking personal advantage, they closed their windows, and perhaps slept, and perhaps didn't.

The general meeting at breakfast was much more satisfactory than the forced hopes of the preceding evening. Even Cooper appeared interested, and submitted, with a good grace, to being mounted on a mule, and made to join in the wanderings of the day. The scene has already been described. It was here, as you, dear reader, well remember, that you made the first acquaintance with my hero; but it was new to all, except to him. As they halted at the Well, and looked down upon the wide fertile valley below, all declared that they were already repaid for their journey. Poor Cooper stretched out his arms, as though he would embrace new vigour from that soft, but bracing air; his face lighting up, as it had not done for nearly a long dreary year. Miss Fairfort was particularly attentive to him, walking by his side as they pushed on to the moors above, making constant kind enquiries, and, though she did not know his sad history, manifesting the finest sympathy for his melancholy, lost look. When they reached the highest point upon the moors, Cooper was the first to speak—

"It is well worth while living a whole year in a dungeon of a city, to feel what I, at least, feel now."

It was the first spontaneous remark, beyond daily commonplace converse, that he had made for months. Oh! how sincerely Edgar breathed a silent thanksgiving to Heaven for this healthful sign. And, oh! how pure the prayer went up from the uncontaminated altar of the hills! As they returned through the village, Miss Fairfort remarked, that almost every man touched his hat, every girl had a curtsey, every boy a nod, every woman a smile, for Edgar Huntingdon.

"You seem to be well known here, and respected," she added.

"Yes, I am pretty well known. My oldest friend is one of the Afrel villagers. May I introduce you?"

If, dear reader, you do not know to whom the young man referred, I think you treat me but indifferently. He led the way up to the green mound below the church, and knocked at the door of Betty Nestfield.

"Eh! is it ye, bairn?" exclaimed the old dame; "I'm so glad to see ye, but"—in a whisper—"that isn't yer sister, is it?"

"No, Betty; this is Miss Fairfort—a daughter," he added out of mischief, trying what effect a sound that has a marvellous magic for most people, would have on the old villager—"a daughter of Lord Fairfort."

Her simplicity was no wise disturbed by the announcement, nor by Miss Fairfort's extended hand. She only said, honestly, "I'm sure it's very good o' Miss Fairfort coming to see us poor folk, and I'm glad to see her; I thought it warn't yer sister."

"You have known Mr. Huntingdon a long time, have you not, Mrs. Nestfield?" asked the young lady.

"Ay, honey! I have that. I remember him when he war a very little un, and he war t' nicest lad that iver came to Afrel, he war, though I say it that he's been kind to. We've had a wedding," she continued, in her garrulous way, "i' t' old church this forenoon, and they would have me for a witness and sich like—an old thing like me."

"Indeed!" said Edgar, "which of the good Afrel people have been getting married?"

"Nay, it war none o' our folk; strangers like, and grand uns, as it might be ye two bairns," said Betty, innocently, "only not so bonnie as ye, quite. She war a fair lass, though, but took on a good deal; but I suppose it's way wi' 'em all. They're gone honeymooning like. I thought o' my poor Nestfield, and our being wed, fifty-seven year come August."

And she went on talking as she had so often talked to Edgar before, whilst Miss Fairfort listened to the old woman's kindly recollections of her "good man" that was gone. Jessie was asked for at Edgar's whispered suggestion. The favourite donkey's history was fully gone through, and Miss Fairfort, gently patting the creature that, next to Edgar Huntingdon, occupied perhaps the first place in Betty's affections, stipulated that, should she want a ride, Jessie was to carry her. The old lady was delighted; and she never forgot the "bonnie lass wi' the blue eyes that war so kind to her good man's Jessie."

The afternoon was spent in rest, well-earned by the morning's exertions on the hills. The day closed clear and peacefully; a single star, that had stolen a march upon the night, even as the sun departed, already shone out, heralding the moon. At last she came, halting on the extreme ridge of the eastern hill, as if to gaze upon her realms, and then mounting to her high-canopied and myriad-jewelled throne. It was such a night as that on which Edgar had stood upon Afrel bridge previously to plunging, on the morrow, into the turmoil of the world. To this spot did he lead Miss Fairfort, followed by Frank and Cooper.

"I was here," said Edgar to his companion, "eighteen months ago, the scene differing in nothing from the present one, save that I was alone. There was the same garrulous river, the same moon, the same purple on the hills. It was here I framed finally my resolution to struggle to achieve some success, and effect some good. The same church-tower which we see now, lay there in the quiet night, and I prayed that, like it, my aims, though pointing loftily upwards, might ever seem to point to Heaven. Standing here again, I cannot avoid the question—so far, has the prayer been heard?"

"I have been told," said Miss Fairfort, apparently changing the subject, "that you have watched many days and many nights by Mr. Cooper's bed-side during his illness. Is it true?"

"Yes. Who told you?"

"He did, this morning."

"Well?" enquired Edgar.

"This is my conclusion, Mr. Huntingdon. He who, though so ambitious as I know you to be, can step aside for a time from his fond purpose at the call of sad human nature, must have motives pure indeed. I think your prayer was heard."

"That I am very ambitious, I acknowledge," he replied. "But I should lose my own esteem, much less should I think of seeking yours, if I preferred the high-flown efforts for renown to the performance of a more humble but more pertinent duty. Is it not better to discontinue the journey, and stay to pour oil into the wounds of one who has indeed fallen into the hands of robbers. Poor Horace! We know not, Miss Fairfort, when our turn may come."

"Nay," she answered, taking his proffered arm, "we will not be melancholy to-night, despite the moon. Shall we walk by the river side? Every blade of grass is distinguishable."

"I should be a safe guide here on the darkest night: this spot was my nursery."

"Indeed! few are so fortunate. How the ripples fret against the stones, just below the bridge; putting themselves, like children, quite out of breath with it."

"A pretty fancy; they seem to be aware that they are getting nearer to the turbid towns, so they try to leap back, unwilling to leave the sweet meadows they have journeyed through this bright summer day."

"Yes," said Miss Fairfort; "they do try to leap back. I never noticed that before; *they* have no ambition."

"They have no souls, Miss Fairfort. All they have to do is to make sweet, unconscious music, to be soothing, and performing their gentle office, even without knowing it—I was going to say, as you do."

"I wish I could do even that," answered the beautiful girl,—"could even imitate those puny waves. And yet, how much grander to rush on to the mighty ocean, and be a part of *it*, helping to bear its wondrous freights, its glorious burdens. I cannot understand a man not being ambitious."

Shine on, O moon! Deepen, deepen, thou purple on the far unconscious hills; stay not thy babble, simple river, though these young and tender souls talk thus—thus fancifully. Well-a-day! Love alone grows not old. But circumstance will not—will not die, and tyrannizes yet. Crouch low, thou stealthy passion, in the poet's heart—crouch low, crouch low! He speaks:

"Frank and Horace are on the bridge. Shall we join them?"

CHAPTER X.

"The passion of a moment came
As on the wings of years."—WORDSWORTH.

"And, what is more,
I'm loved by Hermia."
Midsummer Night's Dream.

ANOTHER morning broke, a worthy rival of its predecessor. The party started immediately after breakfast for Glendover; a letter having forewarned the good landlady of the Glendover Arms of the intended invasion of her worthy hostelry. The road ran along the river the whole five miles, the edges thick with wild roses and luxuriant May in their very prime. The dew was yet on the rich side-slopes; the morning carollers had not yet completed their protracted orisons; the Afrel hills smiled kindly approbation on the summer scene. Each eye followed Edgar's, as he rose in the carriage and pointed through the trees to a long, white stuccoed house, over whose side innumerable creepers clambered. This was the Glendover Arms, at whose threshhold they soon alighted. Here they rested till one o'clock, in deference to his Lordship's wishes, and poor Cooper's debility. At last, they started for the Abbey. They passed along the garden, whose walks were almost choked up with vagrant flowers, across a broad meadow that sloped down to the Scarf, turned a projection of rock, down which tumbled the well-known waterfall, and the Abbey was before them. Shattered oriel, and leaning arch whose symmetry was well nigh gone; turret, moss-grown and crumbling; pillars which supported nothing; rifled altar, and pillaged sanctuary,—all were before them—wrecks, splendid and haughty yet:

> "To which the palace of the present hour
> Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower."

"This—this is the spot," exclaimed Miss Fairfort enthusiastically, "which I have long sought. Surely it was here that the Peri caught the penitent's falling tear, which reopened the gates of Paradise!"

"And here," added her father, who had a truly English taste for Goldsmith, "that Angelina met her long-lost love, and asked the gentle hermit of the vale to guide her lonely way."

Edgar turned to Cooper—

"What think you, Horace?"

"I know not if tears ever open the gates of Paradise; but this is a spot where a penitent might well shed them."

"And you, sir," said Miss Fairfort, turning to her brother, who had sat himself down upon a broken column.

"If I may hazard a conjecture, I should say that it is the scene of Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence.'"

"O Frank! it is a shame to introduce your affected indifference into such a scene. Do you not see that it is a sort of desecration? Can you not imagine the monk in the 'Golden Legend,' sitting at that window, with the Gospel of St. John before him, watching the swallow on her nest beneath the eaves, and sketching from it the illuminated letter which commences the sacred name of God? Why do they sneer at those devoted men?"

"Why, indeed, Annette!" said his Lordship, whose disposition was a reverent one, and who was too well acquainted with history to be a bigot; "to call them idle is to call oneself ignorant. With all our boasted advance, our mechanical contrivances, and our undoubted energy, we build neither so artistically nor so durably as the men who erected this and many similar structures?"

"Do you not think, my Lord," suggested Edgar, "that it is because we are not animated by the same motives? Faith—intense faith—and a zeal burning for the glory of God, raised this pile, noble in its worst desolation. Perhaps not a single stone was laid without the thought in whose honour it was placed there. And the architects were the workmen also; the same men were at once the carvers and the priests of the sanctuary. The hands of nobles, and not unoften of kings who had put aside jewelled crowns, laid together this solid masonry."

"Ah, yes!" said Frank; "when his majesty carried the hod, and my lord mixed the mortar, and the masons did not swear over their work, nor fuddle themselves over hydromel and sack, and never struck for three bits of lead more apiece,—when the head architect never quarrelled with the head ventilator, and supplementary estimates were not yet invented, there was some chance for a building—but now!"

"There is a much better chance for *you*, now," said his sister; "it is well for you you were not born in those days; you would have had to starve."

"I am astonished, Annette, at your want of historical accuracy! I was under the impression that these monks of yours supported all the poor idlers of the neighbourhood."

They journeyed on through the woods, often turning round to catch a glimpse of the ruin through the occasional breaks in the trees, and at the fantastic windings of the silvery Scarf. A dull, heavy, monotonous sound announced their approach toward the Leap. The river moved on slowly and painfully, long streams of grey froth floating on its surface. The ground grew rougher at every step, the noise louder—louder; then nothing but slippery rock, a deafening uproar, and there was the Leap. Immediately above, the river, opposed by huge blocks of natural masonry, was as narrow as a mountain stream, as though it had gathered itself up for the desperate dash. It came on, quickening its pace as it neared the ledge, a confined but swollen mass. It took the terrific leap, and it conquered, and it raised a triumphant shout, flinging its scornful spray into the bewildered air; and it foamed and panted with the fearful effort—then went its way more calmly on, dashing the froth from its breast, a splendid victor!

"Does it not," said Edgar, "seem like a great man exulting in the prowess of his strength and intellect, laughing defiantly at the world, breasting its mighty opposition, recoiling for a while that he may break through the barriers with all his collected force, then taking the desperate bound, and vanquishing,—filling the universe with a majestic pæan, and going on his way calm, sublime, and long-remembered?"

"And must all," asked Cooper mournfully, "who have not such strength, perish?"

"Yes, all who throw down the gauntlet, and bid the world to pick it up!"

"Then," said Miss Fairfort, "it will be by their own choice?"

"Generally, but I think not always. There are some men whose simple existence is such a defiant manifestation of gladiatorial power, and who march onward with such exulting, even if unconscious strength, that the world grows jealous of their usurping that might which it arrogates to itself alone, and tries to stem their course. It grew thus jealous of poor Chatterton, and it crushed him. It grew thus jealous of Byron, and he laughed aloud, and took the giant leap, and went his scornful way."

"It is very, very noble," said Miss Fairfort; "they who can do this, are to be gazed at, wondered at—they are demigods! But, Mr. Huntingdon, are they to be envied? To use the sweet idea of that intellectual athlete, whom you have mentioned, I would rather be a pettish mountain stream, and run and have my tears kissed away on the breast of my soothing mother lake. This, rather this, a thousand times!"

"Yes," added Frank, adopting his sister's tone. "This, rather this, to be a village brook and end in a gutter!"

"This, rather this," said Cooper also; "and conclude life with a garden-chair and a posset!"

Edgar answered nothing; it was the first time Miss Fairfort had so strikingly differed from him. But everybody's meditations, whatever they were, were summarily invaded by luncheon being announced as ready in a choice open spot within sound of the Leap. It was half-past five before they again started forward. An almost circular drive of some eight miles, through wood upon wood, brought them to the summit of the loftiest eminence in that extensive range of hills, about a mile from the Glendover Arms. The sun was setting upon a scene that seemed conjured up by a wizard power. Every foot of ground they had travelled over that day lay visible beneath them. There, rose Afrel Church—there, the Well, on the southern hill—there, a narrow broad line, the road they had come along in the early morning. They turned their eyes westwards; and still the river, and the woods, and the hills stretched far away—a splendid brotherhood of pride and beauty. And over them the sun outspread his beneficent hands, and blessed them ere he went his way. Long did they gaze; and my hero, with his fair companion, was still riveted to the spot when the rest had descended. The sun sank lower—lower; one purple cloud surmounting it, the only one upon the vast horizon. The remaining expanse of sky seemed transparent; and they gazed as if with momentary expectation of seeing the veil roll up, and angels in the heaven beyond ascending and descending upon golden wings. Scattered far and wide, shone molten stars, fallen emanations, but burning brightly still, from the throne of Eternal light. One took shape as it were of a chalice, lifted up for mercy and atonement! Another moment, and the sun touched the outline of the farthermost hill. Both had long been silent; Miss Fairfort was the first to speak—

"If we were told that yonder sun was setting for the last time,—that the earth would still go its weary round, but that its bright day-star must be extinguished, and that we must take our final gaze of its departing glory, I wonder what would be our agony, our despair?"

"It would realize my idea," said Edgar solemnly, "of a terrible·after-world!"

"You are very generous," she answered, smiling, "to discover a reply to my absurdity; I was wandering, and thought aloud. It is so foolish to conjure up impossibilities."

"Miss Fairfort, what you have uttered is no impossibility. If you have spoken what to you has no meaning, you have strangely translated my thoughts. Listen to me!"—and his face, turning from the departing orb, flashed full upon hers as he spoke. "To me, you—you are that sun; I hang upon your radiance; I live only in your light; if you set, I am desolate. The world will still go its weary round, and I with it. I know what I hazard now, for you have described it. Tell me—tell me—is my day-star about to set, and for ever-more? I know I have nothing, nothing to offer you; I have but the love and future of a poet—can you, will you accept them?"

The sun had half disappeared; the west was a mass of burnished gold; nature seemed to pause, with that impassioned lover's lips, to listen to the answer of his fair adored one! Her head had fallen on her bosom, which heaved with an emotion yet unuttered, and as if unutterable. When she spoke, it was in a low, measured voice.

"Pardon my silence," she said. "It is not easy to speak. I had not—believe me, I had never anticipated this." She raised her head now; tears were hastening to her eyes. Again her beautiful lips parted, and she spoke more rapidly. "Accept them? Oh! who could know you, your noble generosity, your unselfish heart, your pure ambition, and refuse them?" He trembled towards her, with outstretched hands and glowing eyes; he touched her form. "I loved you," she continued, "at our second meeting. I never"—and the tears came faster as she said it—"never, never thought I should tell you this!"

It was his heart now that was too full for utterance; but he put his gentle arms around her, fondly folding her to his breast, which should be hers—her thrice-blest sanctuary, her shelter, her only home, through all the perils of this rough and troublous world. Unresistingly she leaned upon that heart which she knew would be her stay henceforth and for ever. She did not hide her blushing face: she could look into his eyes now and feel no shame that they gazed only upon her. The sun sank peacefully behind the hills, solitary witness of that first fond embrace.

"O Annette!" he at last exclaimed, "that I should have deferred such bliss as this! As I love you, I thought my sun would set this day. Annette, Annette, is it so that you love me? But, darling, knew you not how I worshipped you? How did you not expect this?"

"Ah, Edgar! you say you loved me, and yet *you* knew not what I felt for you; and yet, oh, how I have treasured your every look and word! Was not concealment possible to both? I thought I had never seen the woman worthy to win and retain your heart. Dear one, I think so still—and so *I* never hoped."

He bent over her sweet face, taking as his lordly right that first kiss that never comes but once, that baptism of love, that rapture of a life! How he encircled her within his sheltering arms, as though he would have kept her to himself alone, and would not have anyone in the wide world beside approach the treasure of his love! And yet he smiled.

"Indeed, my pretty one, I will try to become what you fancy I already am. It seems so cold to say I will live for you, die for you, when of course I will; but when you know more of this heart of mine, much that appears gold will prove but tinsel."

"No, Edgar, no," she answered, placing her beautiful hand upon his lips, as though she would not let him speak such heresy; "indeed it will not be so. As I know you more I almost fear I shall half repent my presumption in consenting to even worship at such a shrine. You must teach me what you will: I will try to learn to cherish you as I ought."

"Darling, you will need no teaching.

But do you remember what you said at the Leap to-day about defiant ambition? It was the only time you ever tortured me."

"Pardon me, Edgar, pardon me; but I remembered also what you said seven months ago—that poets are by nature gentle, but that they want for a companion a woman who will reverence their talents, and think there is none like them. I am sure—and it is no woman's fancy—there is no one on earth like you. I love you, you only: more, if I may say it (for you said that poets required this) even than you love me; so I am comforted. To use your own dear words, I will be your satellite, moving only in your orbit, and so you shall never be the gentle poet transformed into a tiger, facing the world and daring it to the struggle. Oh! if I were to be of the women you cursed! What a responsibility! yet——"

"Yet, sweet one, you accept it?"

"Yes, yes, Edgar, I accept it."

Surely this beautiful girl said truly that she loved him even more than he loved her. He marvelled to hear her quoting sentences of his, which he was able to recall as she uttered them, but which, otherwise, he had long since forgotten.

"How you remember everything! But I was not such an egotist as to speak those words of myself."

"Did you not?" she asked with simple astonishment, for she had even then persisted in thinking him a poet. "I thought you did—I had no doubt of it."

"But if you loved me then, dear Annette," he urged, "and suspected not my feeling, how could you bear to talk to me as you did, taking such generous interest in my future?"

"Ah! that is a woman's secret, which

she can never explain. I cannot show it to you; but, love you, though I did, and passionately, I was not unhappy—I was at peace. I had never encouraged—do you understand me?—my natural fondness for you. I had said to myself that it would be useless—would be wrong—and no one would ever know it. It is different when you know—when you have been told—that you are loved. Then—oh! then——"

"Well, dearest?"

"*Then* you feel as I feel now; but I cannot utter it. But *you* never showed me that you loved me."

"I dare say not. Nay, I tried hard, Annette—very, very hard—to hide my feelings—even to conquer them. Last Christmas I left Fairfort, because I feared I could not conquer while in your presence. At last I half fancied that I was victor. But when

I saw you again, the other night, at Afrel, I found out how utterly I had been mistaken. I loved you more—more than ever—even, dearest, as I love you now."

"But, why," she asked seriously, "did you try to conquer it? Did you fear we should not be happy?"

"Do not be angry with me," he said, half smilingly. "But—but you know—I thought Lord Fairfort would—would not see in me one quite worthy of his daughter."

"Oh," she answered eagerly, "how wrong of you! Papa is always praising you to everybody. There is no one of whom he thinks so highly. Was that your only reason?"

"The only one, indeed. But I was thinking, long and late, last night about this, and, I confess, closed my eyes irresolute and undecided; but it struck me that Lord Fairfort would not have bestowed upon me such signal proofs of esteem and liking, and even planned this expedition, if he had so strong an objection as I owned, and own still, he has a right to have. Nay, do not stay me, little tyrant! Had I resolved to speak to you this day, I probably should not, as yet, have spoken. It is useless to plan. I do not believe in Fate, therefore it must have been Providence that prompted the avowal I made, as the sun set, which has transformed my being, and won for me the treasure of your heart."

All fear, all doubt, was past. Whenever their eyes met—and it was very often—they read, mutually, all that was within; and that all was Love—boundless, exclusive, inexpressible Love. They went over all their many former conversations, comparing their then meaning with what they seemed to mean now, making clear what was half dim before; and one thing, above all, was plain —that they had always loved each other. Yes, even from before the night of the 14th of June, when they had held their first romantic converse; and if they were silent for a while, they were thinking one of the other. Once, when Edgar was both silent, and apparently absent, she pressed his arm gently, and said—

"What is it, Edgar? You are anxious about something. Tell me."

"No, darling, I am not anxious; but I was looking into the future. I do not, for ten months, come into my property——"

"Hush!"

"It is not quite £2,000 a year, so that——"

"Do not let us talk of that," she said, with sweet simplicity. "I am sure we can never be better than we are now. I shall never love you better. Your plans are mine. There are some things on which to consult me is to doubt my love, and that you will never do."

And thus they walked homewards in the soft evening twilight, clasping each other's hands with a thoughtless familiarity, as if they had done so always. O wonder-working miracle of Love! A word is spoken, and a new world flashes into being. Tender, purest maidenhood, harbouring chaste thoughts with jealous care, that, a moment ago, would have loosed the hand which was too freely pressed, trembles not, starts not, shrinks not from—nay, rushes to divide — the passionate embrace and the wildest kiss. O Love! how wondrously pure thou needs must be! Time, at thy word alone, relents. We may know each other

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from the cradle upwards; but not all our conversations, from the first lisp to the final sigh, annihilate restraint like that one wizard moment when we say, we love!

As they walked across the meadow towards the Glendover Arms, they could see Frank standing in the garden, evidently awaiting their approach. As the wicker-gate was opened by him to receive them, Annette ran hastily to the house, to prepare, she said, for tea, which could be seen spread out upon the table within. Edgar linked his arm in that of his friend, and in the flower-tangled walks, told his successful love. He had never feared to meet from Frank anything but the fondest approval; nor was he disappointed. His darling's brother blessed the day, and the setting sun, which had thus united the two beings whom he cared for most on earth; and the roses, and the wandering honeysuckle, breathed forth, in answer to the dew, their sweet pleasure and benign consent. And even the poet's world grew more intensely beautiful in the halo of the summer gloaming and the tremulous light of beautified Love!

The evening wore away as with an unnatural quietness. It was well that they all sat talking in the twilight; no one asked for lights. His Lordship was dozing; Horace Cooper loved to grieve in darkness; Frank knew well enough what the newly-betrothed would prefer. At nine o'clock Miss Fairfort pleaded fatigue, and retired; Edgar shortly accompanying Cooper, as was his wont, to his chamber.

"Would you be surprised," he asked, "to hear that I am engaged to Miss Fairfort?"

"No—surely not. I have watched with

an interest that has almost renewed my youth the quiet love-essays between you? Tell me, Edgar, do you sincerely love her? I think I could live again in the reflection of your happiness. I am sure she loves you."

"She has told me so, on Glendover Mount; where, in the sunset, I avowed what I could no longer conceal. She confessed that she loved me at our second meeting."

Cooper did not express the astonishment his companion expected: on the contrary.

"Of course," he answered; "how could she but love you? Had you been a woman you would either have won or broken my heart; as it is, you soothe it. If I happened to love Miss Fairfort, I should no more attempt to rival you than, in my present state, to wrestle with you. I have never spoken my gratitude and love towards you, and speak it I never shall; for simply, Edgar, all language fails me. But let me say this—if you are happy with Miss Fairfort, I shall begin to be contented without—Mary Linwood!"

What could he say in reply? He did not take as a just estimate the opinion of grateful affection; but he could not avoid the sweet sensations of being thus belauded, even though he knew the praise was so wildly overlaid. Oh, how glorious seemed life! What marvellous transformation had thus compassed him round. Hitherto he had written what he had thought was poesy; but now he lived in a poet's land, whose veritable visions outdid the gorgeous day-dreams of truth-contemning fabulousness. And this bewitching feeling found—nay, desired—no vent in words. Ah! were we always happy, the world would lose its singers. To be eloquent, one must needs be sometimes sad.

Again, in the secluded flower-walks he talked to Frank of his past, his present, and more than all, his future. At last he said, "Enough, then; let us go to your father."

Lord Fairfort had just laid down the *Times* of the preceding day, and was about to comment upon some item of intelligence, when Edgar said, "I have come to speak to you, my Lord, on a subject of some importance; but, unless you wish it, Frank can be present."

"Yes—eh?—yes, Mr. Huntingdon; certainly," answered his Lordship, somewhat confused, but all attention; "Certainly—speak—yes."

"Not to delay your Lordship, then," said Edgar, "I come to ask your approval of an affection I have for some time entertained, and this day expressed, for Miss Fairfort."

Lord Fairfort seemed either so absolutely amazed, or bewildered, or both, that he could scarcely put together two consecutive words.

"Do I—surely no—understand you—Mr. Huntingdon—do I—you don't—er—understand you that you have—have proposed to —to Annette?"

"Yes, my Lord—that is what I—what I would say."

"But, Mr. Huntingdon," added Lord Fairfort, gradually recovering his self-possession, "Am I—am I wrong—I believe I am not—you will pardon me, I am sure, for going into this matter—am I wrong in believing that you are not what is called in a position to—to marry, which, I take it, is the object a man has in view when he—

when he proposes—for a young lady's hand."

"Certainly, my Lord! About this position your Lordship must be the only judge. I confess I am not blessed with a fortune similar to that of many whom I fear you will consider—and I cannot deny it—are more fitted to aspire to Miss Fairfort than I am. Simply, in ten months, I shall have at my own disposal a fortune of about £2,000 a year." His Lordship jumped up as in amazement. "At present, I have scarcely £300."

"Good God! Did you know this, sir?" asked Lord Fairfort, turning to his son; "did you know — that this — that Mr. Huntingdon was in the almost immediate possession of the income he mentions?"

"Certainly," answered Frank. "I was always aware of it."

"I wish your judgment, sir, were equal to your information and your nonchalance!" answered his father angrily. Then, turning to Edgar, he continued with assumed calmness, but with a face deadly pale, and a manner strongly impressed with pain—

"Pardon me, Mr. Huntingdon, if I have not been over-courteous. I thought you had done me an injury; I find, on the other hand, I have, though unintentionally, inflicted one on you. I owe you this explanation. I pledge you my word of honour that I had not the faintest idea you were heir to such a property as you mention. I am not in the habit of inquiring into other people's affairs when I have no reason to suppose that they concern me. I saw you, an orphan and of full age, living in a style that, if I gave it a passing thought, I must have guessed to be supported by about the sum you mention, £300 a year. That you had anything further, I never heard—I never supposed. You were spoken of as my son's friend—I saw you—I liked you—pardon me, Mr. Huntingdon—I like you still. £2,000 a year, if you will allow me to say it, is a gentleman's fortune, doubtless; but still scarcely one which I am justified in expecting the husband of my daughter to possess. I do not—I cannot—blame you; I thought you in possession of an income just sufficient to support yourself in the expensive and honourable profession you have adopted; and I doubted not, neither do I doubt now, that your talents will bring you eventually that wealth which, though the least, is one of the rewards of success. But I knew that such wealth would not be yours for many years—certainly not till long after my remaining daughter was—if she ever were to be—settled in life. Had I been aware of the existence of the fortune which I now am assured is yours, I would never have acted as unfortunately I have done. I have misled you, no doubt; unwittingly, but still I *have* misled you. I have allowed you the freest intercourse with Annette; you were justified in supposing that I could have no objection to a possible union which I took so little trouble to prevent; nay, which—I have no doubt the world will say so—I took so much trouble to bring about. I am at least glad to find that I cannot blame you."

"You have left me, my Lord," answered Edgar, with emotion he took no pains to conceal, "but little to add. I may perhaps say that I all along thought myself not the peer of your daughter, or I should have told her my love six months ago. Your Lordship's conduct *did* mislead me; still, no fault was yours. It has been a sad, sad mistake; for if I do not misinterpret you, you disapprove the affection which I fear I have gained, and most certainly have bestowed."

"Then I am to understand that Annette has heard from you what you have expressed to me, and—and——"

"And has accepted my love, subject to your Lordship's consent."

"Well, I suppose I must be patient. Were I to upbraid you, Mr. Huntingdon, I should only be still more unjust to you. But I must be straightforward. Under what you properly call a sad mistake, I permitted an intimacy between you and my daughter, which has ended thus. I consider it my duty to tell you, however, that *I* cannot accept your offer, or endorse the so-easily obtained consent of my daughter. There are distinctions in this world—social distinctions—stupid ones, I dare say, but still they exist, and cannot be avoided."

"Then you refuse that approval, without which neither my offer nor Miss Fairfort's acceptance, be assured, my Lord, will be acted upon?"

"Yes, Mr. Hungtingdon, I *do* refuse it; that is exactly my meaning."

"I suppose, then, my Lord, all I have to do is to depart?"

"In that you must be your own guide. I do not quite see the necessity, though perhaps it would be the wiser course." Edgar turned to the door. "Nay, Mr. Huntingdon, let us part in peace."

"In peace?" said Edgar bitterly, and mechanically repeating the words. "Yes, my Lord; certainly in peace. Had I no higher principles, my love—esteem, I would say, for your daughter would make me depart in peace."

And Lord Fairfort was alone. Cooper heard his door open gently, and a voice whisper, "Horace! are you awake?"

"Yes; come in. I have been thinking of you."

At these words, Edgar hesitated, and felt inclined only to say "Good night," and depart, with the misery untold. However, he entered, and closed the door.

"Be calm, Horace."

"Yes, yes; but why?"

"I have something to tell you; but you must not be excited."

"Good God, Edgar! you are as pale as this sheet. Speak, what is it?"

"Lord Fairfort has refused his consent, and—I am going."

Cooper sank back in his bed, and covered up his face. When he again sat up, he said, in the old deep tone which had left him for some time—

"Has the curse fallen upon *you*?—you that have never wandered? Am I dreaming?" And he rubbed his deep-sunken eyes.

"It is no dream, Horace. I am going away to-night—directly. Frank will accompany you to town, where we shall again meet. Good-bye."

But Cooper held his hand firmly, speaking in a half-musing tone, as though he were alone.

"That *I* should have repined, and wondered that *my* life was ruined, and my heart broken! He suffers, who has never sinned! Impossible! O God! see my faith, for I understand nothing!"

He relaxed his grasp, and fell back upon the pillow. Edgar bent over him, saw that it was only grief which shook him so, and crept gently out of the room. Frank was standing at the hall-door, with a knapsack in his hand.

"I have put in the things you mentioned. There—will that do? Is it fast? Ah me! I did not expect this. But I will trust to Time and that Something which rights everybody in the end."

"You have been too fond of me; you have all over-rated and spoiled me. I wish I had never called in Piccadilly. Another will be miserable now; that is the worst. I submit. Good-bye. Tell *her* all."

And the retreating figure crossed the bridge, and was lost in the distance. He strode on through the woods, and meadows, and lanes towards Afrel, on the opposite bank of the river to that along which, in the happy morning, he had ridden with hope and her by his side. He seemed to hold no converse with himself, to harbour no thoughts, to cherish no regrets, to feel only the desire to leave Glendover far, far behind him. The moon looked at him from over the trees; three hours ago the sun had set on—let us forget it.

On! The dew shaken by the wanton night-breeze from the perfumed May in the thick hedgerows sometimes fell upon his burning cheeks, sometimes on his parched and tenacious lips. He did not court it, he did not shake it off, he did not seem to heed it in any way. He came to Afrel bridge, which he had to cross before he could gain the high road, beyond the village. He halted, and looked over. The river was flowing on as before; ay, as it was flowing last night, when he had gazed upon it with her from whom he was flying for ever. Quietly slept the hills, quietly rose the solitary church-tower, quietly looked down the moon upon him, and upon it all. And he thought of the words which he had uttered, and for which his dear companion had gently chid him: "We know not when our turn may come." On! All were asleep in Afrel. The village lay behind him, at last the night too. The sun rose as he entered a large town. It was beginning to shake off slumber. On through the half-empty streets, up some stone steps, a whistle, a jerk, and Edgar Huntingdon was on his way to London.

CHAPTER XI.

"Ah me! from all that ever I could hear,
Did ever read in tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth.
But . . . it was different in blood."
Midsummer Night's Dream.

LORD FAIRFORT had been sitting at breakfast with his son for some time, in complete silence, when his daughter entered. She looked round for Edgar, with evident but bashful disappointment.

"Mr. Huntingdon is late this morning; I wonder if he is unwell. He always prides himself upon being down the first."

"Mr. Huntingdon has gone," said his Lordship.

"Oh, indeed! I am not astonished," she replied, though I think she was *very* astonished, and not a little mortified; "the Abbey is so beautiful! Are we to join him there?"

"I mean to say, he has gone—gone away —left Glendover."

"Left Glendover? What has called him away so suddenly? Anything serious, papa?"

"No, Miss Fairfort; he has not been called, neither was he sent away; but he has gone—gone, because he did not find me so anxious as you to step down from your position—at least, mine. I refused my assent to your absurd love-making; and I refuse it now, and always will. And he has gone, for anything I know, to the——" His Lordship had nearly said "devil," but he checked himself, and added, "land's end."

This petulant sentence showed most faithfully Lord Fairfort's present frame of mind. Usually so courteous, however rarely affectionate, to his daughter, he could not bring himself, at this moment, to treat her feelings with common delicacy. He was so annoyed at his own error, so wounded at his daughter's readiness to accept this boy, so vexed at having but little to urge against him, he thought the whole affair such arrant and ill-judged nonsense, that he lost all patience, and, it must be confessed, all decency. The beautiful girl's eyes filled with tears as he spoke, and she answered, in a tremulous but indignant tone—

"You have refused my hand to the only man on whom I can ever bestow my heart. For the rest, receive a daughter's submission." And she hastened out of the room.

Lord Fairfort could endure it no longer.

"Damn it, sir," he broke out to his son, "I did not send you to college to pick up all the rhyming adventurers you could meet. Perhaps you think the house of Fairfort wants a scribbler to sing its praises; it will require it before long if its character descends into your hands. I can get my epitaph written more cheaply than by that fellow. Poetry be damned! You'll introduce a fiddler next."

There are few men who, when they have committed an error, can be just, during its consequences, toward their own family; and Lord Fairfort was not one of them.

"And as for your sister, she has no more sense than if she were Sappho."

Frank did not wish to make any reply, but resolved at the first pause to leave the room, —and a man cannot storm in this absurd fashion for any great length of time, unless he be interrupted by some one. Cooper was not yet down. Frank sought him.

"Has Edgar gone?" was the first question.

"Yes, he went last night. He walked. He told you all, did he not?"

"Yes, yes; I don't know how it is. I have prayed to-night that I may not become a sceptic. Everything seems so inexplicable. I suffer, who deserve well to suffer. Huntingdon suffers, who has always, I am sure, been the almost perfect being he is now. I bow my head, and wish to believe, but it is very, very unintelligible, all of it; very, very—poor Edgar! Did he ever tell you my—my history?"

"He never mentioned it but very vaguely," replied Frank.

"I can't tell you, then; and Edgar wont be able now. Never mind; 'tis not worth the telling. And Miss Fairfort, too—cursed, all cursed!—all!"

The old way had returned in a single night. Could it be otherwise? The arm that had supported was now itself shattered; no wonder that he again fell. They knocked at Miss Fairfort's door, and entered. She had been walking up and down the room, maintaining a cruel calmness, her eyes brimming with tears, which she would not permit to trespass farther. Her cheeks were suffused with an indignant shame, but her lips were white with the endeavour to repress the current of her suffering. She stopped as they entered. But when Frank approached with extended hands, ignorant of the part he had taken, and suspecting he had but come to reconcile her to her fate, she turned from him, and said loftily—

"So he has gone, this adventurer, this squire's son—the poet has gone his way; and I must remember my position?" She raised her head with a queenly dignity. "Thanks to my social position, I must wed some empty fool with a splendid coronet to cover his shallow brow. No, sir!" and her arm, as she waved it, seemed rather the sceptre of scorn than of love. "I will not mate me thus for the broadest acres of the dullest duke in England. Out on your pride of birth and your flimsy heraldry! If Edgar Huntingdon is not noble, there is nothing lower than nobility. I would not care to face the world penniless with such a man! But he has gone!"

Cooper had stood with folded arms, his head slightly bent, but his eyes had been fixed on the disdainful speaker. He went up to her gently; she did not repel him.

He took her hand, placing his unrestrainedly on her shoulder.

"Miss Fairfort," he said softly; "he is the best, wisest, purest being I ever knew. I have loved, and lost; but I own *she* was not his peer. Why he is thus punished, divine I cannot. Poor Edgar! Love him! Yes, yes, it *is* nobler to love him hopelessly than all else, shine the sun on them as it may. Fear not—he has often told it to me—There is a God in heaven, and He will see to it."

"Thank you, thank you! Oh, yes, Mr. Cooper, if papa only knew. He is the noblest, purest, best—so gentle, so generous. Perhaps it is as well: no one is worthy of him—at least, I am not. But I will love him; you love him, too? Then we are friends, and shall always be so. Oh, what a disgrace to spurn him so!" And she covered her face, transfused with a sincere and resistless shame.

Frank then told her of the part he had taken; how he had stood — and would always stand — by Edgar; how he had borne the brunt of their father's harsh words; how he was sure Edgar would come back some day, and their father would get to know him, somehow, even as they knew him; and how all would yet be right. The affectionate girl kissed him tenderly, begging him to forgive her abrupt and unkind injustice; thanking him, and saying how strange it was that Lord Fairfort alone did not know the extent of Edgar's worth—and begging to be left alone, now. Then, for the first time, came a torrent of tears. They could be stayed no longer; and, in her solitude, they fell fast and full. An hour she thus spent in a paroxysm of sorrow—the wildness of outraged hope. At last it left her, and misery sank down to the bottom, a dead weight; and the waters of customary bearing closed over it. But it was there still; unseen, though sometimes reflected; heavy, obstructing, motionless.

That day they set off for London. From Annette came no assent—no opposition. It was all the same now to her whither they went; and Glendover, with its majestic ruin, its primeval woods, its river, and its sweet sunshine, lay meditating, all alone, on what it had witnessed but yesterday.

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The sun is pretty high and powerful, though the dials in the Temple point but to half-past ten. Wigs over knit brows grow plentiful in Lincoln's Inn, and gowns flutter and tremble with the vast importance of their legal wearers. Men do their best to look thoughtful. Young bloods, persuading themselves and their governors (as the phrase is with them) that they are killing themselves by their bi-weekly attendance at lectures, emerge from mysterious chambers, disporting frantic pins and runaway scarfs. They have a seedy look, as of tobacco-ashes and the lees of port wine, and are off to Pim's to make up for the loss of the "sweet restorer, balmy sleep," by copious indulgence in oysters and potass-waters. Attorneys' clerks, more deplorably seedy, and in a sottish way of their own, who have fuddled themselves, over night, with half-and-half and strong shag at Dr. Johnson's, trudge, slip-shod, up Bell Yard, with greasy deeds under their arms, and stop to compare notes with the inn-porters, who, for some unknown reason, are ticketed, as though there were a chance of their being lost. But the sun has its own way most in Temple Gardens, where Edgar Huntingdon has been basking this hour and a half.

Trafalgar Square is astir, and Farrance's and the Royal Academy divide the presence of the carriages. Bills of fare at the one, and catalogues at the other, are conned knowingly. There is a great crowd, as usual, round Maclise's length of canvas, with its pretty, simpering, meaningless, girls' faces, and its vividly-coloured draperies. A smaller, but more select group, is gathered round Stanfield's last. Edgar is one of them. Oh, how he wishes that white, tossing spray were rising to his lips. "Portrait of a Lady" is the next. She has blue eyes, and brown hair, and is very like—but he is closing the catalogue. He goes down the steps, and wanders anywhere.

The day wears on. Piccadilly is very full. Rotten Row and the Drive more crowded still. People are leaning over the railings, chatting familiarly and leisurely: bow-legged men, of the seat of the riders, and the flesh on which they are mounted, and tell marvellous equine stories; military characters, smart, moustached, and fierce, but faded just a little, and smelling slightly of Boulogne, poverty, and hells, discussing the roses or the paint inside the passing, ever passing, broughams; innocent lads of fifteen or so, with the down on their cheeks, and kindliness in their unspoiled hearts, bestowing some attention on the horses, but admiring the maidens most; one thinking that the girl in the grey habit is so like his cousin Amy, "And you know, Jack, she's a stunner, and I'm very fond of her." Edgar has been leaning here some time—how long

I can't exactly say; he is going now. As he wanders in the secluded avenues of Kensington Gardens, he says, aloud, "'Who loves, raves—'tis youth's frenzy'—ah, how true! Yes — and 'the sad necessity of loving!'" And is silent, as if submitting to the inevitable fate. He is in Regent's Park, and the sun is setting. He hears his name pronounced—it is by Pampesterra.

Said I not so, Edgar Huntingdon? Four suns only since you stood here! The same spot; the same sun setting; the same companion; the same heart, but broken!

CHAPTER XII.

"What will not woman dare?"—*The Corsair.*

"How is this?" asked Pampesterra, with surprise; "you were to be away a week, and you return thus unexpectedly. And how ill you look!"

Edgar sat down on the bench beside him. For some time he made no answer; he did not like to speak of his sorrow. At last he said, "I suppose I must tell you. You have heard me speak of Miss Fairfort?"

"Yes, often. You mean the sister of Mr. Fairfort, who was at the University?"

"I never told you that I loved her. I never told anyone, till I told her yesterday."

"Surely she has not rejected you?"

"No, no, unfortunately she has not: would to God she had! She loves me. But her father is opposed—strongly opposed to our union. So it must not be—and I came away. I could not stay and see her, and speak to her, oh, how differently!"

Edgar had thought that Pampesterra's woe could gain, at least, no intensity. But, utterly cast down as the exiled officer had long seemed, his former look of misery and lost wretchedness was as nothing to the silent agony of pain which his face now, and so suddenly, assumed. His head drooped even lower; his lips quivered; he drew a long sorrow-laden sigh.

"You, our only benefactor, our good friend, for whom we would die—thus, thus!

This is the crowning grief. What will Catalina say? Shall we go to her? She left me but now."

"No; I think I would not see her to-day. Tell her what you will; she would readily guess if you did not tell her. I will come to-morrow."

"But where are you going?"

"Where? Oh, yes! Well, I scarcely know, I am a wanderer now"—and he tried to smile. "We must comfort each other."

"I shall not burden you much longer!"

Edgar seemed not to understand him. But, as he looked on that debilitated frame, which one day's real illness would probably suffice to destroy, the terrible thought flashed across him that the father might die, and the daughter be left to his sole charge! And he could see no farther. He dared not contemplate it; he had not the heart at this moment. But strange fancies would suggest themselves. Alas! for Catalina, too, was there not the strong necessity of loving? And yet there was no one for her to love but her father, and—whom? Out on it! He felt powerless in the presence of amassed misfortunes.

With an aching heart he bent his steps towards Pall Mall. There, with the old look upon him, all the benefits of a month's recovery negatived in a day, sat the object of his visit. Cooper had arrived, it might be an hour ago. For a long time neither spoke; they did not seem to think that any remark was necessary. There was a broad contrast, as they sat almost facing each other, in the effect suffering had so far produced, and was likely to produce, in these two young men. Cooper was completely broken down, jaded, submissive. The only change perceptible in our hero was, that his eye had lost a little of its calm brilliancy, and that his face was paler even than before—pallid, I think, expresses it; but he appeared nowise unstrung. There was, rather, an almost fierce compressment of the lips, as if Grief had but strengthened Will.

"I shall get my name put down for a commission in the line," said Cooper, at length. "I can endure this state of torture no longer. I will drown regret, if I can. I have suffered enough; and for the rest, I will blot out all I may of the past. It is no use bearing with a torment that will neither leave nor kill you. Would to Heaven there were a war!"

Edgar shrank back at the words, but could he reprove them? Was he to ask Cooper, after such a year's agony, and in his present state, to endure still what might possibly be somewhat cured thus? Surely not. Yet in his heart he doubted.

"Your resolution comes on me unawares," he said; "perhaps it is the best course you can adopt. But of this, Horace, be sure: it is better to endure an eternity of pain, such as you have, I know, been of late enduring, than—think me not harsh—renew that past for which the present is doubtless sent as an amercement. Surely such will not be again."

"God forbid!" replied Cooper solemnly. "But I am unfitted for mental exertion. *I* am strong no more. I leave *you* to struggle. *You* will not be such a coward; but I—I must give in. I could have laboured still, had I seen you happy. I was becoming a part of you—beginning to live in your existence, as you poets live in your own creations. Your sorrow has thus only multiplied mine. I will do my best to get rid of both. I can be of no use to myself, much less to you; only the burden I have been so long and so hopelessly."

"I would not chide you — nay, I cannot," Edgar answered. "You have seen the blow that has fallen on me. It is not so heavy as that under which you suffer; but it *is* heavy. Yet, Horace, this I say in no vain, boasting spirit: if an angel came from heaven, and told me that there was no hope for either of us, I would turn me and strive as I best might. We were sent here to love, doubtless; but not solely to love. Nothing is necessary in this life but clearing away regrets that only impede, and working at what underlies them. I dare say it will be two or three years before I shall be able to plod on as before; but I am sure the years *will* bring back the ability.

Even now, I feel not so anxious about mere fame as I did; and it may be well. Suffering has perchance been sent that I may be of some severe use to myself and others; and this we know, at least, that in nature the fruit never comes till the flowers fall off. Sorrow may show me more distinctly what I have to do; and were the sorrow my own only, I could even feel very, very grateful for it. What will be, neither you, nor I, nor the wisest know; but this we all have seen, that present exertion brings future guerdon; patience, fulfilment; and submission, hope. I do not suffer less from this belief; but I gain encouragement that, being deprived of love, I may discover duty."

"Oh, yes, Edgar! you are of a different mould—you are not of the clay of which I am formed. Suffering is with you as with Orion — it transforms you into a glorious constellation! But do not scorn me who am only earth. This long pain crushes me; I am ground down." And the poor fellow bowed his head with piteous humility.

Edgar tried to soothe him.

"No, no; we *are* different—but only in the extent of what we have to bear. I have not to endure what you have; my loss is as nothing. But do hope—only hope. God will have mercy yet, in some shape, if you will not despair."

At half-past nine the following morning, Edgar was bending over law-books and law-papers at King's Bench Walk. The struggle, of which he had spoken, began at once. He set himself manfully to work; and with some fresh sadness he was obliged to confess, that night, the effort had been an unsuccessful one. Every morning was it bravely renewed. A week had passed: had anything been gained? He thought not; but he was satisfied that he had *lost* no ground. Another week went—a fortnight had elapsed. He had fought hard, that young fellow, and had not driven away the foe one whit, but still held his position. They who happened to meet him now, believed him readily when he said that he was refusing all invitations, on the score of health, which at present seemed not of the best. Seven hours every day had he spent at Trantham's. The fourteenth of June came, and he had, in the fortnight, positively learned nothing. This day, at one o'clock, it must be owned, he fairly gave in, and begged for a truce, that he might bury, and pay obsequies to, the dead.

A year ago! And Annette Fairfort had

first loved him. A year ago! How had they watched the moon, that night, and said romantic, sweetly melancholy things of the great city, in which (where was she?) he still was. A year ago! And Cooper had been the soul of that room, where he now sat, dumber than himself. A year ago! And the thoughts never finished, but went on reverting, and dissolving, and reverting still. And the enemy had kept the field, unrestrainedly, for four hours!

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At ten o'clock that evening, Lord Fairfort's carriage was standing at his door in Piccadilly. A quarter of an hour later, it drew up before Sir Lionel Leicester's, in Eaton Square. As Miss Fairfort entered the drawing-room, there was a stir amongst the elder gossips who usurped the wall. His

Lordship had been pleased to communicate his late trouble, in the strictest confidence, to his two oldest and dearest friends. One, if not both of them, had been pleased in turn, and of course again in the strictest confidence, to impart the information to his or their dearest friend. So that, by this time, our hero's love affair, in some various distorted shapes, was known to a pretty select circle, which was every day widening. Miss Fairfort's dejected looks well bore out, at least, the foundation on which each version of the narrative was based. Her face had already lost no little of its fulness and bloom: her beauty, though perhaps as noticeable as ever, had changed its character from freshness to an unconscious melancholy. Many strange mishaps accordingly occurred. On one occasion, five people, to each of whom she had assuredly engaged herself, claimed her for the same dance. By two o'clock she had offended half the men in the room; and her brother once whispered in her ear—

"Do you know, Annette, that you have danced with Glenbarton five times?"

"Have I?" she said; "surely not. I don't remember it." And within fifteen minutes she was dancing with him again.

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St. John's Wood church tolled out the second hour of morning. A cab was standing before the house where the Spanish exiles lodged. The door opened: Catalina embraced her father, hurried down the steps, and drove off. The cab stopped in Air Street, Piccadilly, where she dismissed it, walking on alone at a quick pace, till she came to Lord Fairfort's house. She rang.

"This letter is for Miss Fairfort: it is important, and must be delivered as soon as she returns. You will not forget?"

The old porter said it should be attended to without fail.

Catalina had scarcely turned from the house when Lord Fairfort's carriage drove up. Annette retired at once to her room, wearied and sick at heart. She took up the note and read:—

"Animated by the sincere desire of assisting my benefactor, and her whom he loves, I ask an audience of you. I shall watch your return, and seek admission a quarter of an hour after you should, and I trust will, receive this note. I am woman as yourself. CATALINA PAMPESTERRA."

"Pampesterra? Pampesterra? Surely I have heard that name. Oh, yes; one of the many who are the receivers of *his* benevolence. I have heard Frank speak of her father." She rang. "What can she want with me? However, she asks in his name: it is enough."

She gave the requisite orders. The quarter of an hour had elapsed. Catalina was ushered in. Annette started at her exceeding beauty, advanced, and bade her welcome.

I must ask you to remember, dear reader, you who have been born under English skies, bred with English notions, and imbued with English prejudices (I use not the words offensively), that Catalina was a daughter of the south; a Castilian, cradled in the land of love, where passion is the main sustenance of its people, where affection is duty paramount. Those who love must be united; nothing must be left un-tried to attain this sacred end. The refusal of a parent is tyranny: submission, little short of sacrilege: resistance, at least, a right. Such were the sentiments that flowed hereditarily in her veins,—such the notions which pursued her. She knew nothing of our northern ways; of our stern habits of self-restraint. She had heard simply from her father that her dear benefactor loved, and was loved; and that Lord Fairfort stood between these feelings and their fulfilment.

"Forgive me this intrusion," she said; "but Mr. Huntingdon has been so good, so generous to my dear father and to me, that I would venture anything in his behalf. Need I ask pardon for this from the woman who loves him?"

"Indeed I have nothing to pardon, rather to thank you—as I do. But, Miss Pampesterra, do you come from Mr. Huntingdon? Are you his messenger?"

"He does not even know that I have sought you. I have seen the sorrow at his heart, and would remove it, and serve him, that is all."

"And how? What is the purpose of this visit? Will you not sit down?"

"The purpose of my visit? Oh! are you of my sex, and do you ask that? I come to bid you fly—fly with *him*—fly this very night. I have prepared everything. I await only you."

"But you own you have not spoken to Mr. Huntingdon? I do not understand you."

"O Miss Fairfort, pardon me, but I cannot tell you how cold, how unloving you appear. Do you doubt he will fly with you to the end of the world, and at a moment's notice? He *loves* you! It is *you* I would gain—you I would rouse!"

Such energy, such fire, such faith were there in the speaker's tone and words, that, as she thus upbraided, implored, assured, Annette almost believed her; but when the sound ceased she was the English girl again.

"You do not, I see," she said, taking Catalina's hand, "understand our habits and our motives. I cannot do what you ask. I love Edgar—ah! more than you even in your wild earnestness can imagine. I shall always love him; but you are mistaken; he would not fly with me thus, nor would I with him. No, no; I thank you from my heart, indeed I do, but—" and she kissed Catalina affectionately, "but, good night!"

The Castilian threw herself at Miss Fairfort's feet, clasping the folds of her dress.

"Oh, see me thus! Must I plead for him in your presence, and to you? Will you say you love him, and yet remain here? Women do not love thus. Will tyranny cease because you hug the chain? Do you hope when you will not act? Say that you do not love him, and I will go."

"Oh! but I love him as you cannot know. I would die for him—I would——"

"You would die for him," interrupted the prostrate suppliant, "and yet you will not fly with him—you will not be united to him? Oh, save him! save his heart! it is breaking; shall I be in time to find it not already broken?" Annette turned away her weeping eyes and heaving bosom. "Yes, you will—you will fly—you will be happy in his love; you will lie sheltered by his beautiful heart. *Now*, I will go, and I will return with *him!*"

Annette had ceased to resist. The girl's burning words, her reproaches, her imploring attitude, her beseeching tone, her picture of the breaking heart, had worked her into a fever of blind and ardent fondness for him whose sufferings were thus pourtrayed. Her cheeks had resumed their brightness, relit from the wildly-waved torch of expectant Love!

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Edgar was yet sitting up in his chambers in Garden Court: he had been continuing his day-dreams. A year ago he had met Woofinden, and had talked with him over literary hopes in that room till the sun rose. A year ago!

A violent knocking at the outer door, evidently intended to rouse him from supposed slumber, startled him in the midst of his dismal reverie. He undid the massive bolts, and, to his horror, opened the door upon Catalina Pampesterra.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, with ominous dread; "your father—is he—is he dying?"

"No, no," she answered quickly, and she removed a mountain from his heart. "How fortunate I am: I feared you would have retired to rest. Quick—quick: there is no time to lose. I have a cab here: quick, time flies."

"Be calm, Catalina, and tell me what you mean. I am quite at sea. Sit down: you are so excited."

She continued with nervous rapidity—

"I have been to Miss Fairfort—she consents to fly—I have prepared all—she awaits you. Come quickly: you want nothing."

"Heavens!" he exclaimed, "what have you done?"

"Served you, sir," she said, and burst into tears.

"Nay, nay, I am not angry, Catalina; thank you—thank you—let us explain."

He drew her towards him, and placed her on his knee, soothing and even kissing her, as though she were a child. "You are a dear, generous girl, and I am grateful to you from my heart. But, there, there, don't weep. You do not understand us cold English." She yielded to his gentle caresses with the purest resistlessness. "If Miss Fairfort were to do what you counsel, Catalina, in this country, she would be thought and spoken of as you would not like to hear. We are not a very good people, so we are obliged to be outwardly excessively strict. If you were seen here now, all your own sex would point, all mine would laugh at you. It is very cruel, I know, but it is so. There, it is all right; you have been very, very generous, and I will never forget this." And he dried her eyes, and set her down again. "Did you say that Miss Fairfort consented to your scheme?"

"At last she did, but oh! it took so long to persuade her. I had to go on my knees and weep, and implore, and speak passionately of you, and of all she was losing, and then she yielded." And again the tears came apace into the dark speaker's eyes. "This is the worst; after all this, you destroy my labour and my hope. I promised to be there again within half-an-hour. There are but ten minutes—I must go."

"One moment." Edgar wrote on a slip of paper the following lines:—

"I have seen this poor girl, and explained to her what she did not, and does not yet, I fear, fully understand. You know what my love was; it is, and will remain the same. I know yours. Neither must be stained by a falling-off from duty. I trust in God; do you put your trust there likewise.—EDGAR HUNTINGDON."

Not a word of endearment! though a thousand sweet syllables of fondness rushed up to his lips, and crowded on his pen. For he wrote at the stern suggestions of conscience.

"Give this to Miss Fairfort, if you please."

"But you will come to Piccadilly to see my preparations?" said the patient and artful diplomatist; for she was not yet quite convinced, and as far from being persuaded as ever.

"I must not let you return home alone, at any rate. Go to the cab, I will follow instantly." They soon arrived in Air Street. A travelling chaise, in whose traces were two thorough-breds, was standing a little way down. It was not difficult to guess its proposed, but baulked purpose.

"You wont come, then?" she said, taking his hand, and making a final appeal; "wont you see her for a moment?"

"No, no, Catalina! Go, leave the note, and return immediately."

He walked to the chaise.

"You will not be wanted to-night," he said to the postilion; "are you paid?"

"No, sir."

"Well, here's what I suppose will satisfy you. You had better leave this at once."

Catalina returned.

"Ah!" she said, "I can't comprehend you English; you have the most generous and yet the most quiet hearts. It is all duty, duty, duty. And the women! it seems they are still less to be understood. Will you believe me, Miss Fairfort was in her ball-room dress, as when I left her, in no way ready? She saw that she had done wrong, she said, when I had gone, and she was certain you would think so too. Yet, she had been weeping, and she had many tears that had yet to fall. Ah!—I gave her the letter."

Edgar's stern self-denial had placed him, for the time, above all weakness.

"In, then, my brave little adventurer!" he said cheerfully.

"But the carriage? Wait one moment."

"Oh, it has gone: I sent it away."

"But you have not—I mean, you have not—have not paid for it?"

"Of course I did; it will be all right; jump in, my bold heroine!"

"You cheat me of everything, Mr. Huntingdon!" she said, when they started; "I cannot tell you how I am disappointed; I did think to serve you this night."

And again the tears came, and again he coaxed them away, fondling the weeper as a father would, and telling her that she *had* served him, that she was his best, kindest friend, and that he would never forget what she had done for him. As he said this, she turned her eyes upon him archly, and answered—

"You are Mr. Huntingdon always. You will tell such untruths rather than not be generous."

Pampesterra answered their knock when they alighted at St. John's Wood. He told Edgar that it was as he had expected, but that he could not thwart his poor Catalina, nay, that he had, he owned, partly encouraged her. But Mr. Huntingdon was always wisest, always right. Catalina said she supposed it was so; but, right or wrong, she would never forgive him.

Poor Annette, in her lonely splendour, strangely kept the anniversary of the famous morning of the fifteenth of June. She remained long awake over that scrap of paper, on which were written the only words which she possessed of her poor dear Edgar's. Not one kind syllable, not one fond phrase, did it contain: but she kissed it, pressed it to her heart, wept over it, and read its lesson. She did not regret having temporarily yielded to the generous girl's enthusiastic impetration; for she felt that he would understand all, and gather from it only how much she loved him. She wept, and wept, and fell asleep, still weeping. And there she lay, still in her ball-room dress; her wreath and pendant of fast-fading flowers drooping upon the graceful form that heaved with slumber, and the dreams of Edgar. And her rich brown hair gradually left its folds, as slumber deepened, and fell over the round chiselled arm on which her head was gently laid, the tresses mingling with the golden bracelets which yet encircled, but could no further beautify it. But she still held the precious paper to her lips, which breathed upon it the warm, fragrant incense of dreaming fondness!

And Edgar—where was he? Awake, still awake, in his silent chambers in the Temple. Not dreaming, but thinking—wildly, passionately, tearfully thinking—of her whom he loved, not as men do; no, not as women do, but even as poets love, and poets only!

And thus passed, a second time noticed in this history, the early morning of the fifteenth of June.

CHAPTER XIII.

"He talked; Lord! how he talked!"—DRYDEN.

"Oh! I could not choose but go
Unto the woodland hoar."—LONGFELLOW.

WHEN Annette appeared at the breakfast table that morning, Frank thought that she looked as though she had slept but little, and been refreshed even less. When his Lordship, who, it must be confessed, was striving his utmost by plentiful attention to wean his daughter from her strange, quiet melancholy, and was more than annoyed to find all his attentions for the most part thrown away, left the room, Frank said hesitatingly—

"You danced with Glenbarton very often last night, Annette! I speak to you as your brother. It was acting unwisely, unless—no, I will not insult you."

The tears gathered in her eyes.

"I did not know it. Really, I often forgot where I was. How can I care for such scenes now? How would you have me distinguish between one dullard and another dullard? Even a title does not furnish a sufficiently safe distinction, I think."

"But you must be careful, my dear! I heard your names mentioned in one breath more than once. Glenbarton may translate what springs from real indifference as springing from seeming partiality. And—you understand me."

"Partiality! His translation will need a translation. The Earl of Glenbarton is scarcely the man to fill up the void left by—

Frank! you understand *me*. I utter no complaints. I make my sacrifice to the sophistry of birth and the Heralds' College; but I anticipate some slight reward; at any rate, I expect to be unmolested. I may forego Edgar Huntingdon, but not for the purpose of being wearied by the tiresome attentions of our noble connection, or any other equally well-born, shallow personage. I lay aside love, but I expect peace."

O Eros! that thou shouldst yield to Eirene!

When Frank returned from a Bond Street stroll, uncomfortable at heart, and miserable for the first time in his life, he found Annette making-believe to be very busy with Tasso; as he passed he noticed that the book was upside down. She saw it too, and hastily turned it. He also took up a book; and the progress made by each was probably equally rapid. Shortly, the door opened, and the Earl of Glenbarton was announced.

Perhaps, attentive reader! you were good enough to remark that Annette spoke of the Earl as a connection. The fact is, his Lordship was first cousin to Lord Allanroy, who, as you can probably likewise recall, had married Lord Fairfort's elder daughter. He was a tall and—why need I deny it?—a somewhat elegant man. His most noticeable idiosyncrasy was a marvellous pair of whiskers: their colour might be criticized, their splendid proportions no one could deny. In fact, they seemed to have an unfair advantage of the hair upon the summit of his noble head; for, though by the generous aid of washes, pomades, and ovolavatory applications, it had been forced into just covering the allotted space; still it was evidently ashamed of its manifest inferiority. He was very fair, and had those eyes which people so intensely florid generally possess. He was good-looking, in a wooden kind of way. He was one of those men who, while they escape especial admiration, do not provoke severe strictures. He was as the square root of a negative quantity, neither plus nor minus. Not that I would insinuate that the Earl of Glenbarton was a fool; but he was heavy, essentially heavy. He had been perhaps a little fast—as fast as such ponderous men can be—"in his hot youth," two or three years ago. But a Prime Minister had discovered that his patrimony was considerable, and his influence might be made extensive; so he told him that he had a talent for business and public affairs. His Lordship's vote was at least secured; he was assured he had the requisite qualities for success in politics; and he took the Minister's word implicitly. Still he did not quite lay aside his pretensions to be a man of fashion; and the world does not readily interfere with any claims, however ridiculous, backed by such a title, such a rent-roll, and such whiskers, as were in the undoubted possession of the Earl of Glenbarton. The stupid books were exchanged for more stupid salutations.

"A remarkably—er—good dance last night; did you—er—not—t—think so?" began the slow visitor. "I never—r—enjoyed a dance—ce—more."

"Nor I," answered Frank, as his sister made no reply.

She started as soon as she became conscious of her silence.

"Yes, Mr.—my Lord! it was a very good ball."

"Yers; such good music—such—er—yers—such very good music."

I trust that I draw his Lordship correctly: and yet the portraiture is difficult. He had not the "aw," the drawl of the exquisite. His "er" resembled more the "um" of speakers whose vocabulary is limited: and yet it was not that either. It was his Lordship's own. He spoke heavily—just as he thought—and looked heavily. In point of fact, he spoke, what I must call as regards him, naturally. He had not even the shadow of a shade of affectation. He merely paused, or repeated his words, because he had no desire to hurry over the ground; at every fresh "er" he took as it were a survey. He was thoroughly self-possessed—manifesting not the least consciousness that he was at all stupid.

"Such a—er—good room, too; yers—was it not, Miss Fairfort?"

She heard her name, and ventured, "Yes."

"Yers; a very, very good—r—room. What do you think of—er—Lady Leicester?"

Annette was again startled by the pause, and answered hastily—

"Very, indeed."

"Most accomplished and elegant," said Frank quickly: "you misunderstand Glenbarton."

"Pardon me," she said, blushing. "Oh, yes, she is very charming—and so clever!"

"Yers—so clever—r—and that sort of thing—perhaps, Sir Lionel—er—thinks—*too* clever."

The Earl was facetious, and seemed pleased with himself as he laughed an equivocal laugh.

Frank joined with one less equivocal, but not quite so spontaneous. Annette said, with a smile—

"I daresay, she is very clever."

Her remark was fortunate this time. Her noble connection was evidently gratified at what he thought her approval of his original and severe joke.

"If your—r—brother would be—er—kind enough to join us—s—would you honour—r—me with a—er—ride in the—er—Row at five—er—Miss Fairfort?"

Annette was playing with a paper-knife. She said, with an abruptness that the Earl mistook for earnest readiness—

"Oh, yes; certainly."

Frank felt sadly annoyed with his sister for her compliance; but could only say that he too should be very happy.

And the noble Earl "ered" himself out.

Five o'clock came. Frank, whip in hand, sought his sister. To his surprise he found her in the drawing-room, still making-believe to read Tasso.

"It is past five, Annette."

"Well?"

"I thought you were ready. Five was the hour mentioned: the horses are at the door."

"You did not ask me to ride with you, did you?"

"No; but you promised to have a canter in the Row with Glenbarton, and of course I agreed to accompany you. See! he comes!"

"It is very strange: I have no recollection of it. Did *you* hear me?"

"Certainly. Be quick. It seems so very rude."

She put down the book and went to dress. She was not quite so long as she might have been, had she been preparing to ride with somebody else. However, many eyes were upon her as she cantered up the Row: for the air brought back the colour to her cheek. The Earl did not extract many striking remarks from his beautiful companion: but as he said to himself, after he had left her in Piccadilly, "though she was rather —r—silent, yet—er—damn it!—we weren't —t—made for—r—talking only—and she's a—er—deuced lovely girl—no doubt of it!"

Do you sneer, O cynical reader? because it never entered the head of the illustrious Earl that, with his rank, wealth, and "er—damn it!—very presentable—er—appearance," he had been boring this "deuced lovely girl?" Somehow I do not think meanly of myself; yet *I* am a simple citizen, with a shabby hat, perfect obscurity, and pay no income-tax. Are you better off? I hope so. But still, I doubt not that we have both bored innumerable people in our time, without as much as suspecting it; and that when the economical mammas have blown out the supernumerary wax-candles, the daughters, with their now unrestrained feet upon the fender, and their silk skirts slightly raised, have said as much without being contradicted. The most illustrious Englishman of the nineteenth century (as Mr. Macaulay calls the Hero-Poet who died at Missolonghi), divided the human race into those who bore and those who are bored. I think the division was unnecessary. We are all one tribe —all sons and daughters of the first couple who bored each other so thoroughly, even in Paradise, that they fell to making mischief, for which we are here earning our bread; and very hard some people find it is to earn. Let us not complain. The tendency to bore and be bored is in us all. "Hanc veniam damus petimusque vicissim." We have our revenge. The victim of to-day is the executioner of to-morrow.

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Edgar had passed another unsuccessful morning. He had learned nothing; so far, it would seem, he had battled in vain. He walked slowly and disappointedly away; and, turning into some place or other in St. James's Street, sat down to dine. Dinner did not appear to offer much stronger attractions than law. He was recalled to the fact that his soup had become cold by a "How are you, Huntingdon?" He turned and saw Edward Bingham.

From him Edgar had met nothing but unmitigated rudeness for the last year; but he was not one, when addressed by the man most persistently and inexcusably discourteous to him, in a tone similar to that which Bingham now used, to display the remotest resentment for the past. He answered the greeting cordially. Bingham had heard, but two or three days before, of my hero's true love not running smooth, and hastened to gratify his intense hatred of Edgar, under apparent warmness. The young man took for granted that he had forgotten, or at least wished to make amends for his former incivility, and had become thoroughly ashamed of his conduct as a boy. So, though not much in the humour to find anybody's society peculiarly agreeable, Edgar did his best to look pleasant, as Bingham sat down beside him, and said, "We had a devilish good dance at Sir Lionel's last night. I was surprised not to see you there."

"Lady Leicester honoured me with an invite, but I did not accept."

"Have you really given up society altogether?"

"For this season, at any rate."

Bingham felt foiled, but he renewed the charge with consummate coarseness:

"But, surely, you are not going to be melancholy for ever, because you can't marry the first girl you take a fancy to?"

Edgar glanced at the speaker, and saw that his recent mischance had somehow become pretty public, and for once he winced. Bingham continued—

"I would not make myself miserable, if I were you. I saw her dance with the Earl of Glenbarton six or seven times last night, and I met her riding with him in the Row ten minutes ago. I advise you to forget her."

"Whom?" asked Edgar, pretending to be busier with his soup than the conversation; though in reality he had never experienced such annoyance as he felt at that moment.

"Why, Miss Fairfort. I heard all about your affair—everybody knows it—and was devilish sorry for you. These damned aristocrats—at least some of them," (he said "some of them," inasmuch as he considered himself as one of the body generally,) "are so infernally proud. I pity you, old fellow! but you might have been sure they would snub you."

Little suspicious as Edgar was, he must have been dull indeed not to see the rude malice of his pretended comforter. He did not wish to talk of *her* to such a fellow, so he said, "Have you seen anything of your brother Percy and his wife lately?"

Percy Bingham had married a friend of Edgar's, a Miss Forsyth, who does not concern this history, save in the elucidation of the present conversation. Edward Bingham had proposed to her two days after she had accepted his younger brother, and was, of course, refused.

"I see but little of them," Bingham replied, with evident discomfort.

Edgar took advantage of the reply, and said, with insinuating sympathy, "Is it too much for you?" Then, in a different tone, whose very query contained in itself a crushing negative, "Or, surely Percy is not jealous of you *still?*"

Bingham could not find a reply. Edgar went on mercilessly: "She is a splendid girl—you missed it there; though, after all, I don't know, she told me you would not have suited her, and I think you wouldn't. Percy is the very man for her—so full of conversation."

He said it in such a seemingly innocent and unintentional way, that Bingham beat a retreat, pleading an engagement: he had but half dined, but he said, even as it was, he should be late.

Horace Cooper would have it that Edgar was perfect; I, his biographer, am of a different opinion; but in this instance I think he would have failed in his duty had he not punished such unblushing malice. And yet, silence would, perhaps, have been more in accordance with prudence. I don't know if Edgar would have thought so, had he seen Bingham, as he left the room, clench his teeth and mutter, with a fearful oath, that he would be "even with that fellow some day!"

It was about four o'clock of the following afternoon. Edgar and Charles Etheridge were the only occupants of the pupil-room in King's Bench Walk. The former had, for the last half-hour, been sitting in the easy chair, silent and motionless.

"What the deuce ails you?" said his companion, at last; "you are becoming as glumpy as Cooper. Are pounds, shillings, and pence, at the bottom of it?"

Partly to escape being further questioned, and partly that he did not exactly know what he was saying, Edgar answered—

"Yes."

"I'm sure, old boy, what I have is at your disposal."

Edgar had always regarded Etheridge as a fellow with much humour, and the only person he ever met who could talk arrant "slang," and yet remain an unimpeachable gentleman. He had certainly never given him credit for much feeling or much generosity. He blamed himself for the unfair estimate.

"You are very kind, very generous, Etheridge; but I did not know what I was saying. It is not a money matter; something even older and more mischievous than that—one of love!"

"Ah! I fear I have no remedy for that complaint, though I think violent exercise is the best one. But I don't see anything so killingly generous as you make out. One wants the *unum necessarium:* another has it, and shells out—simple enough—simple division, in fact; though, to hear you talk, it might be the cubing of unknown quantities, or the infinitesimal calculus."

"Well, well; mask the real nature of your offer under smart levity if you will; but such things are not so common, that we can be easily cheated out of our admiration."

"Which way you like. But, come and dine with me. I have two tickets for the Opera."

"Thanks. I am sorry I must refuse two more offers. The fact is, I am going into the country to-morrow, and shall be busy this evening."

"How long shall you be away? Why can't you wait till the 'Long?' We shall all be off then."

"I cannot stay here, at present," said Edgar, speaking openly to Etheridge, for the first time. "I must leave London behind me for a while."

"Well, cheer up, and be back soon. You're not the fellow to hop the twig from an attack of the 'blues.' Good-bye!"

As Edgar was descending the stairs, he heard Etheridge humming, in his odd way, without reference to any idea in particular:

"Eurydice! the woods,
Eurydice! the floods."

And he paused. Had he not longed for the lyre of Orpheus? Was it not but just he should share the poet's fate?

He walked on to Pall Mall, to say good-bye to Cooper, whom he had seen but seldom the last fortnight, and that always at chambers, where both were generally silent. Cooper was at home, wearing a blank expression; an expression, as if final and unchangeable—as if Sorrow had done its worst, and stood with folded arms.

"I am going to Afrel to-night," Edgar said. "I did not intend going till morning; but as I walked along I thought I might as well start at once. I make no way here; so I go to fight the battle elsewhere."

"Your choice is a strange one. A general would scarcely take up his position where a sad disaster had but recently befallen him."

"I shall have the incentive to struggle perpetually before me. Here, I forget, and waste my energies in oblivious musing; there, I should be perpetually reminded what my object is. At any rate, I will not give in yet; no, nor for many 'yets.'"

Cooper did not appear to be interested. *He* had laid down his arms three weeks ago. He had seen the last of the fight—the final charge—the utter rout. The colours had been lost, and he been made a chained and hopeless prisoner.

"I have done no good," continued Edgar. "So far, *I* have not conquered. I have been at chambers for seven hours, every day, and am no wiser; neither am I disciplined even. I am the raw recruit I was on the first of June. London does not help me. I will see what say the hills to my disease. What have *you* been doing lately?"

"I have just finished Bulwer's 'Zanoni,' for the second time. I have been very busy over it."

Busy over it! Three days' not very close reading, Edgar thought, would have sufficed for the perusal of this book; the other thirteen, then, had been spent in—why, as he himself had spent them.

"It shows," added Cooper, "that the more we know, the more we feel, live, love, hope, and act, the more we sicken, suffer, despair, and yet, alas! not die. It is the old truth. One line of 'Manfred' is the epitome of it all:

> 'The tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.'"

"Nay, Horace! nay; read 'Zanoni' a third time, for assuredly its lesson has escaped you. It is a splendid dramatic sermon—the finest, I think, of our greatest living writer's homilies. Think you not that this is its moral?—That he who would soar above this sphere, before he has performed the tasks which it allots, soars with fettered wings, and will fall again to earth. That he who, in the lust of power, would rule the minds and sway the councils of men, must first master his own prejudices and clogging passions, control his own wild impulses, discipline his own intellect, and purify his own soul. That, having done this, he may then aspire, then hope to proudly rise; then may he wield a worthy and a world-compelling sceptre! That he who cannot wait, will never win. That Patience is the mighty wizard, stronger than Fate, longer than Time—the alchemist, the conqueror! That he who shrinks from suffering, shall not with sacrilegious hand snatch the crown. That knowledge is granted only to calm, continuous labour; and love, to a heart that trusts long, and is not cast down. That he—be it reverently spoken—who dare not face the agony, will not arrive at the consummation!"

There was a long pause. At last, Cooper said—

"Ah, Edgar, I wish I were a poet! Hercules was strong because he was the son of Alcæus; and was not the bright Aurora descended of Apollo? So are you strong. Time was when I read and needed no interpreter; but now, even as you translate the pages, I have not read aright, they fail to move, to rouse me. I do not wish to aspire; I do not hope; I suffer, but not willingly; and I want no crown. When death comes, its functions will be few—it will have but to close my eyes. If I still really live, life is not what I once thought it."

The wreck was complete. Mast, and sail, and helm—strength, volition, judgment,

—all had gone; and it only remained for the waters to close over the abandoned! Edgar could face the sight no longer; he wondered why Cooper was not a chattering idiot. Merciful Heaven! why is reason spared?

Peace! mortal! The darkest cloud that ever rose from earth above, One there can breathe upon. Will it not dissolve, and in a gentle shower descend?—a healing dew!

CHAPTER XIV.

"And as a hare, whom horn and hounds pursue,
Pants to the place from which at first it flew."
GOLDSMITH.

EDGAR was once more leaning over Afrel bridge. He had left the feverish turmoil of the town behind, and come to listen to the promptings of solitude in this sweet, sequestered spot. The hills opened their bosoms to receive him; they had known him from his infancy, and they welcomed him as one long and well remembered. They bent down to look at the poor boy-sufferer, as he leaned over that bridge, where he had once made his compact with ambition; where he had been, later on, a fatal augur; and whither he now came again, seeking fortitude.

The place seemed kindly minded towards him; it was willing to be once more his teacher. He was again a neophyte, a postulant knocking at the gates of Endurance. Still, to-day there came no answer; or, at least, the answer was not understood. He listened to the voice of the river-oracle; but though it kept on uttering the mighty truths, he comprehended not a word. And yet he listened, for the sounds were very sweet, and the cadence soothed him. And he looked up again at the hills, and he saw that they wore a smile; and he was sure from this that they pitied him, and would shorten his probation. And he felt comforted.

He went up the shady lane, on to the village, and stopped at the door of his old friend, Betty Nestfield.

"Eh, bairn!" she exclaimed, when she heard his voice, "are ye here again? I'm right glad to see ye, tho'. And are ye boun' to stop long, or no but passing thro' like? Is t' bonnie lass wi' the blue eyes wi' ye, this time?"

"No, Betty; I have come to be quiet; I am alone!"

"But ye du luke white, joy! I didn't mark ye when ye came in, my eyes is failing so. Sit ye down, honey! My Bess 'll see to t' asses."

Edgar told the old dame his sad story. He did not know why; he felt he *must* tell

Betty. She listened very earnestly, with a hand on each knee, and, as he finished his narration, she raised them slowly, and her wrinkled face all smoothed out with astonishment, said pitifully—

"E—h! Didst ever hear? Poo—o—r lad! E—h! I *am* sorrowed. She war sich a nice lass, and so gentle, like. But ye mustn't go sad. Ye know I'm vary sorrowed, honey! I *am*. Ay—I'm sure ye loved the lass. It's very grievous. But ye must try and be cheery, like, and niver think nought of it—no more than ye can help."

She took hold of his hand as he turned away his face that he might conceal a few rebellious tears. There were more in Betty's eyes, but she did not seem ashamed of hers, and held up her head, shaking it very, very mournfully, and accompanying it with a long-drawn "E—h!"

And there in the thatched cottage they sat; the bent old woman, the close of whose journey could not be far off, uneducated, blunt, untravelled, who had read little beyond her prayers; and by her side, seeking comfort, youth in its fairest form; a head beautiful in its manly intelligence; a mind that had already done much, and might prove to be a poet's, a statesman's, an orator's, or all; a heart that beat with the loudest throbs of a beneficent ambition: these, hand in hand. Intellect asking consolation, and Ignorance bestowing it.

"Well, well, joy; but ye know it wasn't all love ye war sent for—anyhow, earthly love," added the good old lady: "ye've to work, too. And if He doesn't wish a thing, why, ye mustn't grumble, but do His will, ye know. *I* lost my poor Nestfield after I'd lived wi' him two-and-forty year. I war sore tried, and took on—I know I did; for it war bad to bide. But wi' me it war all over then: I niver loved no one but my Nestfield. But ther's many another bonnie lass, bairn! and ye mustn't be loitering after one that's hopeless. Ye're vary young, and there's others like the lass wi' the blue eyes, though ye mayn't be for thinking so, now."

Edgar shook his head, but could not argue with Betty. And though she, good soul, did her best thus, in the way of comfort, she had known him, as I have related, from the cradle, upwards; and she knew full well, that he would never give up "the lass wi' the blue eyes."

Edgar had come to the conclusion, that he must begin with a milder discipline. He re-read Disraeli's "Contarini Fleming," and this made him ponder deeply. He read as in a glass where he was himself reflected; much was so true a shadow of his own bygone feelings. He was delighted with the marvellous analytical power displayed by the writer. The description of Contarini's first attempt and failure in composition, when he had thought his head so full of fancies, struck him as so singularly felicitous, as to be almost unequalled in fineness of truth. When the hero came to a certain age, Edgar closed the book; for he knew he must be approaching to the forbidden fruit.

He wished to continue his new poem. He might never have written a line in his life: his soul was mute—his lyre dead; the chords were snapped. Alas! had *all* power gone? He marvelled why verses and images did not crowd upon him when he was alone, as of old,—why they did not come rushing upon his ear unsought and spontaneously. Everything had forsaken him. He had been at Afrel nearly three weeks, and had read a few novels; that was all. Perhaps he had been a little disciplined, but he doubted it. Did he take up the paper, and read some law case, he was soon wandering in the old maze. And he thought of Poltrot de la Mer, who, after attempting the life of the Duke of Guise, and flying from pursuit, at full gallop, the entire day, found himself, at sunset, on the very spot where he had planned the murder.

One morning, when he had been standing a long time on the bridge, the river seemed to speak in a tone that was familiar; and sweet cadences shaped themselves upon his ear. The music went on; some one passed. He looked up, and discovered that he had composed the first thirty lines of his second canto. He went back to his lodgings, on the slope of the eastern hill, committed them to paper, wrote others, neglected dinner, wrote on, and was amazed, when he rose, to find that he had finished the canto. He looked at his watch; he had been composing six hours! Nonsense! Yet there were upwards of four hundred lines. It was so, then. He experienced the first thrill of pleasure that had visited him since that night when he had passed through Afrel, with the knapsack on his back, and the heavier burden at his heart. He had materially wandered from the originally intended plot; the change being tinged with the sobered hues reflected from late events. The rest of the evening he was more at peace.

He had a long ramble away upon the hills, and enjoyed the sunset in his old rapturous way. He began to think that he had been on a wrong track, but had stumbled on the right one now. That night he could not sleep. He read till five a.m., when slumber visited him. He did not wake till after noon. He dressed with difficulty, could eat nothing, and felt altogether what we call "wrong." He was not ill, but suffered from utter lassitude. He knew well enough what it was; as all men who have written too long a time on an imaginative theme know. Twenty-four hours of mathematical investigation do not bring it on, nor will the closest metaphysical study: the application in which fancy is on the strain alone produces such prostration. It lasted all that day; and more or less the two succeeding days: then it left him; and he confessed to himself that he did not feel so utterly miserable. Anguish was no longer sole dictator: there was a sort of triumvirate, formed by Regret, Resignation, and Hope, in which Regret was still Pompey. Things change. May not Hope yet prove the Cæsar?

He often composed now, as he roamed along the hills, or by the river side, or in the green lanes; and in a few days the poem wanted but little to its completion. One bright afternoon he was standing at the open window. He had ceased to look out upon the pleasant landscape; his head was bent down, as though he were in one of his reflective moods.

"Yes!" he said audibly, "it must be finished there; the place will bless and sanctify it. I think I am strong enough to face it. I will go."

He passed through the village, and over the bridge, and along the lanes that lead to Glendover. He has reached the Abbey, but stays not to marvel or regret. He crosses some stepping-stones, and mounts by a path, known to few beyond himself, and he stands upon Glendover Mount! Upon the spot where he told his love to Annette Fairfort! And the sun is setting!

A moment he gazes outward; his head droops slowly down upon his breast; he stands with folded arms and motionless. I think he has been standing there an hour; at least, the sun has long since set. He raises his head, and utters something indistinctly. It is the last verse: the poem is completed! The closing scene took shape by that broken but still sacred shrine. He bares his head, and kneels him down upon the sod where the grass grows short and scant, and humbles himself in prayer, but silently. Heaven only knows for what he asked. But I think he begged that Annette might be restored; but, if Heaven willed it not, *she* might at least be happy, and he be strengthened, and of use!

The days went better now. He would join in the games of the rough village-lads, who had often heard their parents praise the young gentleman, whom they remembered an infant twenty years ago and more. He settled their disputes, and his authority was never questioned. It was always "Mr. Huntingdon says so;" and argument ceased. He introduced a kinder urbanity among these untutored youngsters: himself gentle with all, even with those whom he reproved for harsh or rude words. They had not been accustomed to this treatment. A word and a blow were not out of fashion even at Afrel. These lads absolutely liked Edgar's corrections. Tact has this virtue: that it rules with an unseen and unfelt sceptre. Our hero joined even heartily in the games;

there was always an anxious contention as to which side he should be on. The probation was going on favourably. Not that but, at times, the fit would return, and often leave him only with the day; yet the mists *were* rising. And often, when he had left the cricket-ground, the lads would say to each other, in their simple, admiring fashion—

"Eh! hasn't he bright eyes?"

How long this quiet and mostly secluded life among the hills would have continued, had nothing occurred to break in upon its present calm, I am unable to conjecture. But one evening, when a cricket-match was at its height, large, heavy drops, the sure precursors of a storm, began to fall. Edgar, followed by the rest, took refuge in a shed which stood close by. They had been there a few minutes, and were busy discussing their game and the chances of victory, when a man came walking through the field, bent apparently on no especial errand, but with a long, thick switch in his hand. Just as he neared the shed, one of the lads, called Allan, who, though not more than thirteen years of age, was the most enthusiastic of all the cricketers, appeared to see him for the first time, and made a dash out. The man rushed forward and struck him a fierce blow with the switch. The boy yelled and took refuge behind Edgar. The scream vibrated along our hero's naturally sensitive nerves; he put up his arm instinctively and snatched the switch from the man's hand. Allan took advantage of this to escape. His uncle (such it was) began excusing himself to Edgar, complaining that he had ordered his nephew, two hours ago, to go somewhere with a mule carriage, and that he had been playing cricket instead. Edgar expressed his sorrow at the lad's behaviour; had he been aware of it, he should not have allowed Allan to play; he would speak to the boy, and answer for such conduct not again occurring. But he added, that he did not approve, and where he was would not permit, such brutal violence in the way of punishment. As he walked up the village he met Allan: he spoke very severely and with sorrow in his voice, but still not a harsh word escaped him. *The lad was not made to feel his own inferiority.* Finally, putting his arm round the truant, he extracted a promise that the offence should never be repeated. If it ever was, I know, and hope you, gentler reader! can also guess whose fault it was.

But the deed had been done; the savage blow struck, and the succeeding shriek still rang in Edgar's ears, and made him miserable. He never had been able to endure the cry of agony, arising from cruel torture. He was born, he had often said, a sensitive fool, and it is not surprising that recent occurrences had caused the weakness to be more morbid than ever. He should never be able to play cricket with those lads again. It may seem absurd. Be it so! but he resolved to leave Afrel on the morrow. *Ai! ai!* as the old Greeks used to exclaim when they wanted to express pain. Thou poor sufferer! I know not whither thou art to wander to avoid thy own self. If such a scene as this sets thee off upon the march again, I have but little hope or comfort for thee! Thou art a strange medley of strength and weakness.

A terrific storm was coming on, in the very teeth of the wind. The northern hills across the river were livid with rage, as the serried clouds swept swiftly onwards. Those on the south stood up, rolled out their misty banners, and grimly watched the on-coming of the foe. They met, and their thunder-shouts shook the valley, as column after column of that dark, determined mass broke upon their opposing front, rallied, and rolled back!

And then, as Edgar stood at the open window, he thought the hills looked down at him mournfully, a moment motioning him; and then the peaks wrapped themselves in their ghost-like shrouds—again a moment looked out at him, and then slowly, almost imperceptibly, melted, phantom-like, into the far, unfathomable distance. And Love crept stealthily around his being. And then again the hills thundered out their angry, loud defiance, as the foe sullenly retreated. And he would fly to Annette Fairfort, and he would tear her, ay, from the depths of the darkest cloud that swelled the tyrant tempest! And the thunder-mutterings, answering scornfully, died away, and in the west, as over Glendover Mount a ray of sunshine slanted; and Edgar smiled, as though he did not quite comprehend it or himself.

Morning came, as if with a fresh creation, renovating the world; and the young man felt regret, but could not stay withal. His last visit was to Betty Nestfield.

"I am going back to London," he said to his old friend, "to work. Don't you think I have been idle long enough?"

"Why, bairn, for the matter o' that, maybe ye have; though I think ye'd be better here a bit—but ye're like to know t' best. Are ye any improved, think ye?"

"Yes, Betty; I think I am, a little. It is rather hard to bear though."

"Ay, ay, honey, it's like to be; for she war a vary nice lass, and a bonnie un, too. But, niver ye mind; it 'll come right, somehow."

"Perhaps it will, Betty. But I must be going now. That gig takes me out of Afrel."

"I'm sorry ye're going, bairn. It's happen t' last time I shall iver see ye. I don't think I shall live ower t' winter."

"Oh, yes you will—twenty winters yet."

"Nay, nay, joy! Well, good-bye, and I hope ye'll be comforted. God bless ye, joy! God bless ye!"

There were many curtsies dropped, many hats doffed, and many mournful faces among the cricketers, as Edgar drove away. Poor fellow! he thought he should be obliged to ask the man to take the reins for a time, the tears would gather so. No; he contrives to repress them. Blessings on the hills for their kindly shelter!—on the river for its gentle music! When shall Edgar visit them again?

END OF VOL. I.

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